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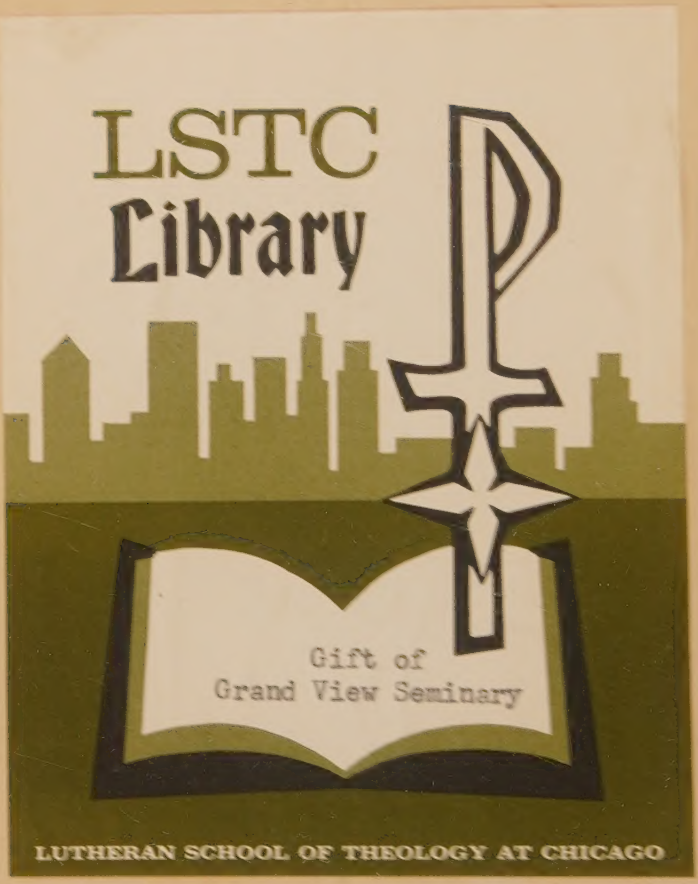
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UNDERSTANDING THE APOSTLES' CREED

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TORONTO

UNDERSTANDING THE APOSTLES' CREED

Carissimi, per hanc fidem oportet nos omnes salvari, hanc debetis omnes scire, saepe dicere, infantes quos de baptismo levastis docere.

—HONORIUS OF AUGST (*c.* 1120 A. D.)

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To the memory of

JOHN HALDEMAN MILLER

a scholarly American gentleman
untimely cut off

NOTE

The author's obligations to various eminent scholars who have written on the Apostles' Creed are, he hopes, sufficiently indicated in the footnotes. In addition he desires to acknowledge here his indebtedness to his Rector, the Reverend Karl Morgan Block, D.D., and to his colleague, the Reverend Percy Thomas Fenn, Jr., Ph.D., for toiling through his manuscript and for their suggestions toward its improvement. Their criticisms were all the more helpful that neither of them was prepared to accept all the author's conclusions. The author is indebted, also, to Mrs. Ruth M. Stone and Miss Dorothy Neuhoff for heavy clerical labor freely and graciously rendered.

FOREWORD

It was a quiet Sunday afternoon in early spring. The setting sun poured through the west window of the church upon the chancel. The second lesson—as it chanced it was the second half of the sixth chapter of St. Matthew—had just been read. The organ breathed and we sang, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word." Then, still standing on our feet, we each began, "I believe . . ."

For some reason or other, the Historian's imagination was unusually active that afternoon; and as his lips recited the familiar words, his thoughts ran back over the centuries. He recalled that for a millennium and a half at least people had been pronouncing these identical sentences, in Greek, in Latin, or in their own mother tongue—laymen, women, and little children, as well as priests. For the Apostles' Creed has always been peculiarly the layman's creed. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer, and Wesley, no less than Thomas Aquinas, all learned it in childhood and prescribed that it be taught to the young. From the second century to the present, it has formed the basis of catechetical instruction in Western Christendom. Throughout the Middle Ages every Christian not of the Eastern Church was taught his *Credo* at his mother's knee

along with his *Paternoster*, and habitually recited it in his or her daily prayers. It was men's constant recourse when faced by trouble, danger, or death. They believed it to be the Apostles' own summary of the Christian Faith. The myth regarding its apostolic authorship has long been exploded; nevertheless it veils a truth. The Apostles' Creed is indeed a summary of the gospel in its most primitive form, and carries us back to the dawn of Christianity. As he recited the Creed that Sunday afternoon, the Historian realized, not it should be said for the first time, that he was engaging in a sacramental act; that he was professing the common faith of Christians in all ages, and that he was sharing in the communion of saints.

Then he remembered that the continuance of this sacrament was imperiled; that, for the majority of Protestants at least, it actually no longer existed. Even in his own communion, the Episcopal Church, the sense of its value was apparently waning, as evidenced by the proposal, emanating from men for whom he had the highest respect, that the use of the Apostles' Creed should be made permissive only. He well understood the motives which were leading to the Creed's disuse: the intellectual difficulties involved and the very real objections to the continued employment of an outworn and uncomprehended formula. But it seemed to him that the ideal solution lay, not in the abandonment of the most venerable of all the Church's symbols, but in the spread of intelligence as to its use and significance. He decided, therefore, that Sunday

afternoon to lay aside certain investigations on which he was engaged and to attempt a modest contribution to that end.

After a much longer delay than he anticipated—delay occasioned by his professional obligations—the book is now complete. Its writer begs that it be not judged as a contribution to the scholarship of the subject. Church History has not been in recent years the field of his special study, and he has relied almost solely upon the recognized secondary authorities. His aim is a humbler one: to place before the general reader an account of the oldest and in many ways the most interesting of the Christian creeds, its historical background and the thrilling experiences and earnest conflicts which gave it birth; and to explain, if the reader be interested, how one professional scholar at least, despite the fact that he is daily exposed to all that is best in what we call the "modern mind," nevertheless can repeat its ancient phrases *con amore*.

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THE OLD ROMAN SYMBOL

I BELIEVE IN GOD, FATHER, ALMIGHTY:

AND IN CHRIST JESUS, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD; WHO WAS BORN OF (THE) HOLY SPIRIT AND MARY THE VIRGIN; WHO WAS CRUCIFIED IN THE TIME OF PONTIUS PILATE, AND BURIED, AND ON THE THIRD DAY ROSE FROM AMONG THE DEAD, ASCENDED INTO THE HEAVENS, AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER, WHENCE HE IS TO COME TO JUDGE LIVING AND DEAD:

AND IN (THE) HOLY SPIRIT, HOLY CHURCH, REMISSION OF SINS, A RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH:

AND IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD; WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED DEAD AND BURIED, HE DESCENDED INTO HELL, THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD, HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, FROM WHENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD:

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST, THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE REMISSION OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

UNDERSTANDING THE APOSTLES' CREED

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

The Central Place Accorded the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments by the English Reformers—By the Reformers on the Continent—And in the Middle Ages—Baptismal Symbols and Their Uses—The Apostles' Creed an Enlargement of the Old Roman Symbol—How It Developed and How It Attained to Universal Acceptance in Western Christendom—Text of the Old Roman Symbol—Evolution of the Old Roman Symbol and the Problem of Its Date—How a Creed Should Be Interpreted—Plan of This Book.

> The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture (*Thirty-nine Articles of Religion,* Art. VIII).
>
> Ye are to take care that *this child* be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church-Catechism set forth for that purpose (Concluding address to the godparents in the *Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants*).

THESE two extracts from the English Book of Common Prayer define the attitude of the English Reformers toward the Apostles' Creed. Protestantism

(and in this respect, at least, the Anglican communion is Protestant) is bound by its principles to give first place to the authority of Holy Scripture; but the reformed Church of England officially accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian[1] Creeds as correct interpretations of Holy Scripture, and hence as binding on the consciences of all Christians.

Of the three, the Apostles' Creed is made the basis of religious instruction. Children are "baptized in this faith," their sponsors (or, in the case of adult baptism, the candidates themselves) declaring their acceptance of it. The text of the Apostles' Creed and a brief interpretation of it are included in the Catechism. The ability to recite "the Creed," the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments is made a prerequisite for confirmation and communion. In a word, the Apostles' Creed, here and elsewhere in the Book of Common Prayer, is singled out as "the Creed" par excellence which every Christian is expected to know and profess.

In these regards the Church of England in the sixteenth century was at one with the Protestants on the Continent.

In all conferences and disputes between Lutherans or Calvinists and the Church of Rome, the three ecumenical creeds were treated as common ground on which both parties stood. The Protestants, indeed, laid great stress upon their loyalty to the three creeds,

[1]The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States has dropped the Athanasian Creed from its Prayer Book and the mention of it from the eighth Article of Religion.

as proof of their orthodoxy as contrasted with the Socinians and other radicals. That the Protestants derived the authority of the three creeds from their harmony with Holy Scripture, whereas the Romanists derived it from their unanimous acceptance by the Catholic Church, made no practical difference. In either case the inerrancy of the creeds was assured.

The Continental Reformers, too, like the Church of England, made the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments the basis of lay instruction. The catechisms drawn up by Erasmus, and by Luther, Calvin, and the other Protestant leaders of the sixteenth century, were all, like the English catechism, expositions of these three formulas, though usually sections were added on the doctrines of the Church and of the Sacraments. Even Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was in form an exposition of the Apostles' Creed. The two Westminster Catechisms of 1648 were the first catechisms of importance to be constructed on another plan. These catechisms in their doctrinal portions follow the logical divisions of the Calvinistic system of theology rather than the articles of the Apostles' Creed, though even they include formal expositions of the Ten Commandments and of the Lord's Prayer.

The veneration with which the Apostles' Creed was regarded in the Reformation era had its origin in habits which were centuries old. From the dawn of the medieval period, the Western Church had insisted that everyone, layman as well as cleric, must learn his *Credo* and his *Paternoster,* either in Latin or in

his mother tongue. The admonition to the godparents which stands at the head of this chapter was no Protestant innovation. It was suggested by a similar address in the Baptism Office of the Sarum Rite, the form of service which the English Reformers found in most general use:

> Godfathers and godmothers of this child, we charge you that ye charge the father and mother to keep it from fire and water and other perils to the age of seven years, and that ye teach it, or see that it be taught, the *Paternoster, Ave Maria,* and *Credo,* according to the law of all Holy Church, and to take care that in all godly haste it be confirmed by our Lord (*sc.* the Bishop) of the Diocese or his deputy.[2]

As early as 787 A. D. we find a council held at Chelsea under the presidency of Roman legates ordering that

> . . . all in general know the Creed and the Lord's Prayer; and that all who receive children from the font know that they are sureties to the Lord, according to their undertaking, for the renouncing of Satan, his works and pomps, and for the believing of the Faith; that they teach them the Lord's Prayer aforesaid and the Creed while they are coming of age; for if they do not, what is promised to God on behalf of them that cannot speak shall be with rigor exacted of them (*sc.* the godparents). We enjoin that this be charged on the memories of all the people in general.[3]

Similar injunctions were issued from time to time on the Continent from the seventh century onward.

[2]Proctor and Frere, *New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1902), p. 584, note 1.

[3]Gee and Hardy, *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (London, 1896), p. 33.

The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 A. D., which marks in so many regards an epoch in medieval history, made it obligatory for every layman to confess at least once a year to his parish priest. This annual confession came to be associated with the Easter communion; and the custom became widespread of providing, as a preparation for this annual confession, Lenten lectures on the Ten Commandments. In general, the Ten Commandments were in common use throughout the Middle Ages as the basis for moral instruction. As a result, they also were familiar to pious laymen.

These four things, therefore, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the *Ave Maria*,[4] and the Ten Commandments, were regarded by the Medieval Church as the irreducible minimum which a Christian ought to "know and believe to his soul's health." Not to be able to repeat them, at least in the vernacular, was the medieval equivalent of illiteracy. We know, to be sure, from the records of episcopal visitations and other sources, that ignorance of these formulas was not uncommon; but the language of these complaints proves that it was regarded as disgraceful. A well brought-up young woman like Joan of Arc would learn her *Credo, Paternoster,* and *Ave Maria* at her

[4]For the benefit of Protestant readers, it may be well to give the text of the *Ave Maria,* or "Hail Mary," as it is recited by Roman Catholics at the present day: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." The *Ave Maria* first came into use as a form of devotion in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The last sentence was added in the fifteenth century. See the *Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v.* "Hail Mary."

mother's knee. Luther was taught the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments by his father. The same was doubtless true of the other reformers. The Protestant aversion to Mariolatry led to the dropping of the *Ave Maria*; but a reverence instilled in earliest childhood led the Reformers to preserve the other three.

The Apostles' Creed, it should be noted, was in the Middle Ages much more than a doctrinal standard. It was in daily use as a devotional exercise. Together with the Lord's Prayer and the *Ave Maria*, it formed an almost invariable part of a Christian's private prayers night and morning.

This fact had one curious consequence. In the choir services of the monasteries and collegiate churches the Apostles' Creed was never said aloud. The Athanasian Creed was sung at Prime on Sundays, and the Nicene Creed was said or sung at Mass. The use of the *Credo* was confined to three of the Seven Canonical Hours, when it was said by each monk or canon to himself in intervals of silent, personal prayer. The Order for Morning Prayer and the Order for Evening Prayer in the English Prayer Book are derived from the services of the Seven Canonical Hours, and the use of the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer at these services is a continuance of the older usage. But it was a distinct innovation that the Prayer Book should prescribe that they be said by Minister and people together and in an "audible" or "loud" voice.[5]

[5]The rubrics in question were omitted when the American Book of Common Prayer was drawn up, doubtless because long usage had made them unnecessary.

Undoubtedly in medieval Catholicism the recitation of the *Credo*, like the recitation of the *Paternoster*, too often degenerated into mere "patter." Do those of us moderns who prize the Creed never recite it carelessly? There was also great need of instruction as to its meaning, a need which the various Protestant catechisms and the Roman Catechism, drawn up by order of the Council of Trent, were designed to meet. Yet it may be doubted whether in the darkest of the Dark Ages the Creed was utterly meaningless. In times of crisis and sorrow, its recitation doubtless brought something of holy comfort, however vague may have been the understanding of its words. Its recitation always stood at least for one thing, a profession of the Christian Faith. Indeed, the Apostles' Creed *was* for the medieval man the Christian Faith in summary. A legend, which can be traced back to the seventh century and which was never questioned until Lorenzo Valla cast doubt upon it in the middle of the fifteen century, told how it was composed by the Apostles at Pentecost under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This famous legend is now so utterly discredited that it is unnecessary for us here to devote space to its disproof.[6] Nevertheless, we shall find that the term "Apostles' Creed" is not entirely a misnomer, that its first framers intended it as a summary of the apostolic teaching, and that it is in fact a true, though hardly a complete, formulation of that teaching.

[6]That the framers of the XXXIX Articles did not believe it is shown by the phrase employed in the first rubric quoted at the head of this chapter: "that which is *commonly called* the Apostles' Creed."

There can be little question that the Apostles' Creed was originally composed for the instruction and examination of candidates for baptism.

In the baptismal ritual of the seventh century, as reflected in the earliest service books which have come down to us, a creed occupies a most significant position. Baptism in the early Christian centuries was normally administered in adult years, and (except under circumstances of urgency) only on Easter Eve. The preceding Lent was utilized for the preparation of the candidates. At Rome in the seventh century the candidates were required to attend seven "scrutinies," as they were called, which began with the third week in Lent. At the third of these scrutinies, they were solemnly taught a creed (the *traditio symboli*).[7] At the seventh or last scrutiny, which took place on Easter Eve itself, just before baptism was administered, they were required, first, to renounce Satan and all his works and pomps, and then to recite verbatim the creed which they had been taught (the *redditio symboli*). The *traditio symboli* and *redditio*

[7]We may remark in passing that the precise origin and meaning of the term "symbol," as a synonym for "creed," is not entirely clear. In all probability it originated either in the use of "symbol" in the sense of "military watchword" or in its use in the sense of "token"—it being a custom in ancient times for one to give his friend who was about to depart on a journey a token (for instance one's seal-ring) to identify him as one's friend wherever he might go. Hence the Christian use of the word "symbol" originally designated the Creed either as the mark of the Christian soldier or as the password which would admit him to communion among Christians the world over. Eventually, however, the word came to be interpreted as meaning "summary," the Creed being the official summary of the Christian Faith.

symboli were not confined to Rome. They were well-nigh universal, although the precise points in the candidate's preparation at which the two rites occurred varied somewhat in the different local churches.

The occurrence of the Apostles' Creed in the modern baptismal rite of the Roman Catholic and Anglican communions is, of course, a relic of the *redditio symboli.* With the practical disappearance of adult baptism, the *traditio symboli* necessarily fell into disuse, or rather it was postponed. The requirement that the child shall be taught the Creed as a prerequisite for confirmation, is its modern representative.

The *redditio symboli* was already an immemorial custom at Rome when Rufinus of Aquileia wrote his commentary on the Apostolic Symbol (c. 400 A.D.). Rufinus prefaces his treatment of the first article of the Creed with these words:

> But before I begin to discuss the meaning of the various clauses (*sc.* of the Creed), I think it not amiss to mention that in divers churches additions to the wording are to be found. Nevertheless in the church of the City of Rome additions have never been made; the reason being, I suppose, that no heresy has ever taken its rise there, and that there the (*or* an) ancient custom is observed that those who are about to receive the grace of Baptism repeat the Creed (*symbolum reddere*) publicly—that is, in the hearing of the assembled faithful—and the addition of a single word is not permitted by those who have been baptized already. The reason that in other churches certain additions have been made is doubtless that, owing to the presence of certain heretics in those churches, it has seemed

advisable by means of such additions to safeguard the faith from their misinterpretations of it.[8]

Rufinus in this passage emphasizes the meticulous care with which the Roman church preserved its baptismal symbol. We are surprised, therefore, to find on examining Rufinus' book, that the Roman creed which he found in use was not our Apostles' Creed, but a somewhat shorter formula, which differs from the Apostles' Creed with which we are familiar in several interesting respects; a formula which modern scholars have agreed to term the "Old Roman Symbol," or more briefly *R*.[9] Evidently after Rufinus' time the Roman church did consent to an enlargement of its baptismal symbol, for ever since the ninth century our Apostles' Creed has been the baptismal symbol of Rome. In fact, the Old Roman Symbol dropped completely out of memory, until it was rediscovered by modern scholarship.

The origin of the enlarged form of the Old Roman Symbol which we call the Apostles' Creed, and the steps by which it became universally accepted throughout Western Christendom, even at Rome itself, are questions which bristle with obscurities. What is certain is that the enlarged form of the Creed was a result of growth. As early as the second century, other churches in the West (in Italy, Africa, Gaul, Spain, etc.) began to copy the baptismal creed of Rome,

[8]This passage is quoted in the original Latin in Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole,* p. 24, note 7. Rufinus' treatise is printed in Migne, *Patrologia Latina,* Vol. XXI, pp. 335ff. The passage occurs on p. 339.

[9]See pp. xvi and 15.

which already in all probability was essentially the Roman creed which Rufinus knew. But they did not preserve it absolutely intact. As Rufinus explains, they permitted themselves to make minor changes, and in particular minor additions. Many of these enlarged versions of *R* have come down to us. They have been conveniently assembled by the late Professor August Hahn, of Breslau, in his *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche.*[10] Our Apostles' Creed is clearly the outcome of an effort to incorporate all the significant additions which these enlarged versions contained. Dr. Burn, the most distinguished recent English authority on the history of the creeds, thinks that it was compiled at Rome;[11] but Professor Kattenbusch, the great German authority on the Apostles' Creed, offers what seem to the present writer very weighty objections to this view, and tentatively suggests that it was composed at Lyons or at Vienne in Burgundy.[12] In any case, it was probably compiled in the eighth or late seventh century; and in the course of the ninth century it supplanted all other versions of *R*, perhaps because it was the form favored by Charlemagne and his ecclesiastical advisers. We know that in 812 A.D. Charlemagne sent a questionnaire to all the bishops of his dominions re-

[10]Breslau, 3d ed. (1897). See also F. Kattenbusch, *Das apostolische Symbol,* Vol. II, Chapter X (Leipsig, 1900); and the index at the end of the volume, which gives references to some minor symbols not included in Hahn and to important criticisms of Hahn.

[11]A. E. Burn, *Introduction to the Creeds* (London, 1899), pp. 233ff.; and Burn's article, "Creeds," in the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 11th ed.

[12]*Loc. cit.*

garding the baptismal usages current in their several dioceses, and in particular regarding the form of baptismal symbol which they were employing. It is a fair inference that he was seeking to secure uniformity.

It seems strange at first sight that the Roman church should consent to abandon its historic symbol; but the fact seems to be that it had already abandoned it long before. Extant service books, which in all probability reflect the usage of the Roman church in the seventh century, indicate that at that time the Roman church was using as its baptismal symbol what we know as the Nicene Creed; and the explanation seems to be as follows:

From the Ostrogothic invasion of 493 A.D. down to the Frankish intervention of 754 A.D., Rome looked to Constantinople for defense against the barbarian invaders of Italy. From 555 A.D. to 754 A.D. Rome was actually a part of the Eastern Empire. This of itself would account for the adoption of the Nicene Creed, for the Nicene Creed was the only creed which the Eastern Church has ever recognized. But there was doubtless also another reason. The Ostrogoths, and down to their conversion to Catholicism about 650 A.D. the Lombards also, were Arians. Thus orthodoxy and Roman national feeling went hand in hand; and both suggested the adoption of the Nicene Creed, which was specifically directed against Arianism, rather than the Old Roman Symbol, which was composed before Arianism was ever heard of. On the other hand, the deliverance of Rome by the Franks from its always distasteful subjection to the Eastern Em-

pire would be naturally signalized by a return to the original Roman symbol. Inasmuch, however, as Frankish influence was now supreme, the form in which the Old Roman Symbol was reintroduced was naturally that common in the North. The reader should be warned, however, that there is a large element of conjecture in this explanation, and not all the evidence at our disposal favors it.

Since the ninth century the text of the Apostles' Creed has remained practically unchanged. The numerous medieval copies of it which have been preserved show only minor variations, mostly of a grammatical character. The only variants which can possibly be interpreted as having doctrinal significance are the substitution of the phrase "resurrection of the *body*" for the phrase "resurrection of the *flesh*" in the Prayer Book of the Church of England, and the Lutheran translation of *sancta ecclesia catholica* as "heilige christliche Kirche." That neither alteration was regarded by its authors as material is shown in either case by a curious inconsistency. The phrase "resurrection of the body" appears in the English Prayer Book in the version of the Apostles' Creed used at Morning and Evening Prayer and in that given in the Catechism. But in the Apostles' Creed as printed in the Baptismal Office and in the Order for the Visitation of the sick, the form "resurrection of the flesh" is retained. The Lutheran Church, while it reads the word "christliche" in the German version of the Creed, retains the original reading *catholica* in the Latin. Clearly, therefore, in neither case was any doctrinal

change felt to be involved. We may compare in the American Prayer Book the permissive substitution of the phrasing "He descended into the place of departed spirits" for the phrase "He descended into Hell," it being stated in the rubric that the two phrases "are considered as words of the same meaning in the Creed."

To return to the Old Roman Symbol. Rufinus' statement regarding the care with which its exact wording was safeguarded in the fourth century is independently confirmed. Its Latin text can be recovered from Rufinus' commentary. Now we have a letter written about 337 A.D. by Marcellus, Bishop of Ancyra, to Pope Julius I, in which Marcellus seeks to establish his orthodoxy by professing his adherence to the Roman creed. Marcellus, being a Greek bishop, naturally quotes the creed in that language; but otherwise the creed which he quotes is identical with the Latin creed which Rufinus' commentary presupposes.[13]

Three other copies of the Old Roman Symbol are extant: a Greek text in a manuscript of the ninth century preserved in the British Museum, a Latin text in another manuscript in the British Museum dating from about the eighth century, and another Latin text in a manuscript in the Bodleian Library at Oxford belonging to the seventh century. On the basis of these

[13]In the extant MSS. of the work in which Marcellus' letter is quoted, the word "Father" in the first article is omitted and the words "life everlasting" are added at the end; but these are probably copyist's errors.

five sources, we may reconstruct the Greek and Latin texts of *R* as follows:

πιστεύω εἰς θεὸν πατέρα παντοκράτορα·
καὶ εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν, τὸν γεννηθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου, τὸν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου σταυρωθέντα καὶ ταφέντα, τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστάντα ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἀναβάντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανούς, καθήμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ πατρός, ὅθεν ἔρχεται κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς·
καὶ εἰς πνεῦμα ἅγιον, ἁγίαν ἐκκλησίαν, ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, σαρκὸς ἀνάστασιν.

CREDO IN DEUM PATREM OMNIPOTENTEM;
ET IN CHRISTUM JESUM, FILIUM EJUS UNICUM, DOMINUM NOSTRUM, QUI NATUS EST DE SPIRITU SANCTO ET MARIA VIRGINE, QUI SUB PONTIO PILATO CRUCIFIXUS EST ET SEPULTUS, TERTIA DIE RESURREXIT A MORTUIS, ASCENDIT IN COELOS, SEDIT AD DEXTERAM PATRIS, UNDE VENTURUS EST JUDICARE VIVOS ET MORTUOS;
ET IN SPIRITUM SANCTUM, SANCTAM ECCLESIAM, REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM, CARNIS RESURRECTIONEM.

The Latin text of the Apostles' Creed in its final form is as follows. The reader will be interested to compare it with the Latin text of *R*:[14]

CREDO IN DEUM PATREM OMNIPOTENTEM, CREATOREM COELI ET TERRAE;
ET IN JESUM CHRISTUM, FILIUM EJUS UNICUM, DOMINUM NOSTRUM, QUI CONCEPTUS EST DE SPIRITU SANCTO, NATUS EX MARIA VIRGINE, PASSUS SUB PONTIO PILATO, CRUCIFIXUS, MORTUUS, ET SEPULTUS, DESCENDIT AD INFERNA, TERTIA DIE RESURREXIT A MORTUIS, ASCENDIT AD

[14]An English version of *R*, side by side with the ordinary English text of the Apostles' Creed, may be found on p. xvi of the present volume.

COELOS, SEDET AD DEXTERAM DEI PATRIS OMNIPOTENTIS, INDE VENTURUS EST JUDICARE VIVOS ET MORTUOS;

CREDO IN SPIRITUM SANCTUM, SANCTAM ECCLESIAM CATHOLICAM, SANCTORUM COMMUNIONEM, REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM, CARNIS RESURRECTIONEM, ET VITAM AETERNAM.

Strange as it may seem at first, there is little doubt that the Greek text of the Old Roman Symbol is the original, not the Latin. The linguistic reasons for this conclusion are excellently summarized by Professor McGiffert:

"1. The words παντοκράτωρ and μονογένης are much more pregnant and expressive than the Latin words *omnipotens* and *unicus,* and are more likely to have been the originals than vice versa. Early Christian literature shows that παντοκράτωρ was commonly translated by *omnipotens* and μονογένης by *unicus,* while the more general Latin words would hardly suggest the rarer and more special Greek words.

"2. The position of the phrases 'under Pontius Pilate' and 'on the third day' is emphatic in the Greek, but not in the Latin. On the other hand the phrase 'into heaven' has the position of emphasis in the Latin but not in the Greek. We can see that there was good reason for emphasizing the former phrases, to make the time explicit, but there can hardly have been a reason for emphasizing the last phrase, for whither should Christ have ascended if not into heaven? It is unlikely that in all these cases the translation, while following exactly the order of the original, should be more expressive than that original.

"3. Ὅθεν ἔρχεται κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς is good Greek, but the corresponding clause *unde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos* is not good Latin. It is true that the construction does occur occasionally in Latin under the influence of the Greek, but the natural Latin expression would be *unde ad judicandos* (or *judicaturus*) *vivos et mortuos venturus est,* and it is certainly unlikely that the translation, while agreeing so closely with the construction and the order of words of the original, should be truer to the genius of the language than the original upon which it was based."[15]

The fact is that Greek rather than Latin was the language most in use on the streets of Rome in the second century, especially among the lower orders, the class to which the majority of the early Christians belonged. As Professor Tenney Frank has shown, from a study of the gravestones of the common people of the city,[16] the majority of the Roman plebs under the early Empire were either Greek-speaking Orientals or their descendants. This explains why St. Paul could write his Epistle to the Romans in Greek, why the letter which the Roman church wrote to the church at Corinth (commonly known as I Clement) was written in Greek, and why Justin Martyr, despite the fact that he was writing at Rome and presumably for Roman readers, used Greek. The first Christian writer at Rome to use Latin was Minucius Felix, who wrote in the first half of the third century.

When and under what circumstances was the Old

[15] A. C. McGiffert, *The Apostles' Creed* (New York, 1902), pp. 44ff.
[16] *American Historical Review,* XXI (1915-16), pp. 689-708.

Roman Symbol drawn up? Unfortunately our sources of information enable us to answer this question only within very wide limits. Marcellus is the earliest extant authority to quote the symbol in full: yet in the literature of the third century there are several references to the existence at Rome of a baptismal symbol, the earliest being in the writings of Tertullian (*fl. c.* 200 A.D.).[17] The symbol must therefore have been in existence at the end of the second century.[18] On the other hand, its adoption can hardly be placed in the first century, for the reason that there is no trace of it—or indeed of any single, authoritative formulation of the Christian Faith—in the New Testament. Had such a formula existed, it would undoubtedly have left its impress on the various passages in the New Testament which attempt to state the Christian Faith. The reader can test this argument for himself if he will read over the Book of Acts and compare the numerous passages in which St. Peter, St. Paul, and the other Christian missionaries are represented as stating the doctrines of the new religion to new audiences. Had an official creed existed when these speeches were delivered, or even when the record of them in the Book of Acts was composed, would they display so little uniformity in their language and in the selection and order of topics?[19]

[17] Appendix, No. 48.

[18] There is, however, as we shall see, some reason to doubt whether in the second century the Roman Symbol had assumed in all respects its fourth-century form.

[19] *Cf.* also the other passages from the New Testament listed in the Appendix, paragraph II. Other evidences of its second-century

We may conclude, then, that the Old Roman Symbol was a second-century document. Much labor has been expended upon the effort to fix its date more nearly; but, as yet at least, without results which all scholars find convincing. We shall content ourselves here with defining the problems involved.

In the first place, exactly what do we mean by the date of the Old Roman Symbol? Strictly we ought to mean the date at which the Roman church officially adopted one set of phrases which by action of the church all candidates for baptism at Rome were required to learn and accept. This, however, is only the final step in a long evolution, and we must picture to ourselves the antecedent steps.

That the first generation of Christians should have failed to reduce their faith to a formula is in no way surprising. It takes time to reduce a new idea to brief and simple statement, as anyone who has ever tried to put an idea on paper knows to his cost. It takes far longer, usually generations, before the ideas by which an important movement is actuated so clarify themselves, even in the minds of its leaders, that they can be collected into a single, orderly statement. To inventory a body of convictions demands a certain cold-bloodedness and detachment. It is something which

origin, to be noted later on, are its use of the word παντοκράτωρ (p. 178), the collocation πατὴρ παντοκράτωρ (p. 178), the active verbs "rose" and "ascended" instead of the passives "was raised" and "was received up," the omission to stress the immediateness of Christ's return and the glories of the coming age, and the omission to refer to the doctrines of the Vicarious Atonement and of Justification, and to the proof from Prophecy.

the preachers and prophets of a movement seldom or never accomplish. The systematizer, the theologian, is usually the follower, often the follower several times removed, of the original seer. To find a statement of Lutheranism, for example, one must turn not to Luther but to the later Lutherans. For a comprehensive survey of the teaching of Jesus or of St. Paul, one must look in a textbook on New Testament Theology; and one rises from the perusal of such a textbook with the sense of having assisted at a dissection. Christian thinking in the first century was too original, and Christian faith and experience too vivid, to be content with any one, fixed form of expression.

But circumstances compelled Christianity to systematize its teaching at an unusually early date. In the first place, it was from the outset a missionary religion. Its preachers were called upon almost daily to explain the gospel to new hearers. Now anyone who has ever been called upon to teach the same subject repeatedly knows how as time goes on the subject clarifies itself; its essential elements stand out from the less essential, take to themselves more or less fixed forms of expression, and arrange themselves in a more or less definite order. Thus the necessities of the Christian mission led insensibly to the defining of the Christian message. The process is clearly traceable in the New Testament, and still more clearly in the early Fathers.

Moreover, the Christian mission quickly became almost exclusively a foreign mission. Rejected by Jews, it preachers turned to the Gentiles. Now much that could be taken for granted in preaching to Jews—

the Old Testament conception of God, the conception of a Messiah, and the conception of a resurrection, for example—had to be carefully explained to Gentiles. Christianity was thus early compelled to define not merely its new and peculiar doctrines but also its presuppositions.

Furthermore, in preaching to Gentiles the Christian teachers were not preaching to empty minds. St. Paul found the Athenians already "very religious."[20] It was, in fact, preëminently a theological age. At no period in the world's history, not even in the Middle Ages, has the interest in religious thought been so dominant and so widespread, certainly at no period has religious thought been so untrammeled by tradition, as it was in the Greco-Roman world in the first centuries of the Christian era. Yet unconstrained as it was by external authority, the religious thought of the Gentile world displays throughout a certain sameness. Whichever of the various religions and philosophic systems of the period we examine, we find virtually the same fundamental assumptions, the same ideals, and as a consequence very largely the same conceptions. The pressure upon the Church to conform its teaching to this common type was very great. Converts brought with them into the Church their accustomed habits of thought, and Christian thinkers were tempted to "rationalize" Christianity, i.e., to attempt to bring it into harmony with the prevailing ideas of the time. There was grave danger lest Christianity should share the fate of other and more

[20] Acts xvii. 22.

ancient faiths; that, like the religion of Homer or the religions of Isis and of Mithras, it should lose its distinctive character and come to be interpreted as simply one more symbolical expression of the common philosophy. Yet there was a sound feeling in the Church that the distinctive character of the Christian Faith must at all costs be preserved. The Christian possessed a moral energy and an inner contentment which "the world" lacked. It behooved the Church to safeguard the gospel which bore such precious fruits and to transmit it in its purity. But in order that it might be transmitted, it must be defined, and so defined as to exclude those elements in the current thought which were alien to its genius.

Accordingly, we find in the Fathers of the second century constant references to a "Standard of Faith" (*regula fidei,* κανὼν τῆς πίστεως) to which all Christian teaching must conform. The term is at first a loose one. Sometimes it is used to denote the whole complex of Christian knowledge. Irenaeus, for example, in one passage[21] includes under it a knowledge of the Scriptures. But it soon comes to mean the doctrines inherited from the first apostles, and we can see that these doctrines are moving toward a fairly uniform formulation. In any case the "Rule of Faith" or "Standard of Faith" means the instruction which the Christian received at baptism; for baptism was the obvious time to see to it that a convert knew and accepted the essentials of the gospel.

Yet the Standard of Faith was not quite a creed;

[21]Appendix, No. 35.

although when a creed did gain acceptance, the terms Standard of Faith and Creed naturally became synonymous. The experience of any modern teacher will help to make the distinction clear. As he continues to teach the same subject year after year, his instruction soon comes to define itself both as to topics and as to their order. Yet it will be long before he finds himself able to reduce his instruction to a formal syllabus which he will not wish to tear up the second time he uses it; and it will be still longer before he succeeds in constructing a syllabus which all his colleagues will be willing to adopt. Yet that is precisely what a baptismal creed was. It was a single, fixed form of statement which a whole church was content to regard as the expression of its faith and to employ as its basis of baptismal instruction and *examination*; for one purpose of such a creed was to serve as a means of sifting out those candidates who still retained dangerous remnants of their pagan modes of thought.

Now at what precise date in the second century did the church at Rome adopt the formula which we know as *R.*? That question we cannot confidently answer. A precise date there must have been, for the adoption involves a formal act; but no record of that act survives. The only evidence which we have to go upon consists of certain passages in second-century authors in which they formulate the essentials of the Christian Faith in language more or less reminiscent of *R.*[22]

[22] A translation of the most important of these passages will be found in the Appendix.

In evaluating this evidence we have to ask several questions: *First,* does the passage under consideration reflect a formal, official creed of some church, or does it reflect simply the common baptismal teaching, the inchoate Creed or Standard of Faith? *Secondly,* if we decide for the first of these alternatives, is the church in question the church at Rome or some other church? In practice both these questions have proved very hard to determine, and very competent students differ widely in their answers. Out of the discussion has arisen a *third* question of great interest. Was the church at Rome the first church to adopt a formal creed, and did other churches afterwards borrow the idea and model their creeds on that of Rome? Or did other churches, particularly in the East, formulate creeds independently? If so, was the Roman creed borrowed from an Eastern source?

On all these questions also there are wide differences of opinion. The discovery of new evidence is hardly to be expected. The only hope is that, as the evidence and the problems to which it gives rise are passed through many minds in the course of the generations, the various considerations bearing on the solution will be sifted and clarified.

In the chapters which follow we are to essay the task of interpreting the Old Roman Symbol and its derivative, the Apostles' Creed. It may be well, before we begin, to envisage the nature of our problem.

The interpretation of any historic creed involves three steps:

1. It is necessary, in the first place, to recover as

accurately as may be the exact meaning of each word and clause, its "literal and grammatical sense." For we must reckon with the possibility that words may have had quite other connotations in the minds of the framers of an ancient document from those which they convey to us; and it is the original meaning of the creed which we must ascertain. Thus, in the Apostles' Creed itself, the word translated "Hell" probably did not mean in the mouths of those who inserted the clause "He descended into Hell" what the word means to us. It did not mean the place of eternal punishment of the damned, but a place beneath the surface of the earth, whither all souls, the souls of the good and of the bad alike, were believed to descend at death.

2. But when we have ascertained the exact conceptions which a given clause originally embodied, our task is only one-third done. It is necessary, in the second place, to distinguish the things which the framers of the clause *assumed* from the things which they asserted. In the case of the clause in question, for example, its authors were not concerned to assert the existence of a repository for departed spirits within the earth. Everybody in their day took that for granted. What they asserted was that *Jesus* descended thither.

3. But even now our task is not complete. We must ask, not only *what* the framers of the creed we are studying asserted, but also *why* they felt it necessary to insist upon it; why, in other words, they included each assertion in their creed. For a creed by definition is a statement of things which in the opinion of its

authors cannot be denied without impairing men's lives. To understand a creed, therefore, it is necessary that we determine the bearing of its several assertions upon life. It is here that we come upon the permanent values in any creed; for at this point the creed comes into touch with human nature and its unchanging needs. The purpose of the clause "He descended into Hell" was perhaps[23] this: The framers of the clause meant to show that, as Jesus was really born, so he really died; that he underwent all the essential experiences and partook of all the essential limitations of our common humanity. Otherwise, they felt, he could not be completely the Savior of men. Here we come upon a conviction which is as modern as it is ancient. The modern Christian insists upon regarding Jesus as his Elder Brother, "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." He still believes that Jesus passed through the portals of death before him, and for that reason death has lost its terrors—although our modern conception of the soul and of its abiding place after death, and consequently the ideas and even the words in which we naturally embody the ancient faith, are naturally very different from those in which it was originally cast.

When we attempt to apply this method of interpretation to the Apostles' Creed, we find ourselves confronted with a complicated problem. We have found that the Apostles' Creed is an enlarged version of a second-century formulation of the primitive

[23]The interpretation of this clause is, however, beset with difficulties. *Vide infra,* pp. 201ff.

Christian gospel. We have, therefore, not one but three sets of teachings to examine: the teaching of Primitive Christianity, the teaching of the Old Roman Symbol, and the additions to the Old Roman Symbol displayed by the Apostles' Creed. Each set of teaching requires to be studied by itself against its own historical background. We must begin by examining the ideas, scientific and religious, which the primitive Christians shared with their contemporary fellow countrymen, in order that we may be able to discern what was new and vital from what was merely traditional in the first Christian message. Next we must study the second-century background of the Old Roman Symbol (Gentile Christianity), in order to divine the purpose of the Old Roman Symbol's reaffirmation of the apostolic gospel and the original bearing of each article. The bearing of the later changes and additions contained in the Apostles' Creed will next claim our attention. In conclusion, we shall illustrate by a famous example the most prevalent misunderstanding regarding the authority of the Apostles' Creed and endeavor to answer the vexed question as to the true nature of that authority.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY: A. SCIENTIFIC

The Anthropology of the Old Testament—Soul and Body—Identification of the Soul with the Blood—Identification of the Soul with the Breath—Things Which This Latter Theory Seemed to Explain: (1) the Invisibility of the Soul, (2) Insanity, (3) Extraordinary Ability Physical or Mental, (4) Prophecy, (5) the Relation of Man to God—Spirit the Source of All Energy—Spirit a Substance—Traces of These Ideas in the New Testament—The Conception of the Holy Spirit—*The Cosmology of the Old Testament*—The Evolution of a Cosmology among the Babylonians—Cosmological Ideas of the Old Testament and of Later Judaism—Cosmological Ideas of the New Testament.

Of necessity the first Christians thought and spoke in terms of the scientific ideas of their day. Thus, the New Testament throughout presupposes certain ancient conceptions as to the nature of man.

As soon as men began to reflect at all, their attention must have been drawn to the phenomenon of death. At one moment they saw before them a person, active, responsive, self-directing; the next they beheld what was to all outward appearance the same person, but utterly inert. What had happened? Evidently something had departed, a soul; and as age after age early man pondered on the problem, two theories as to the nature of the soul presented themselves: one that the soul was—or at least was connected with—the blood, the other that it was to be identified with the breath.

Both theories are to be found in the Old Testament. As an illustration of the first, we may take the law forbidding the eating of the blood of slaughtered animals. The Law of Deuteronomy requires that it be allowed to flow out upon the ground; "for," says the legislator,

> the blood thereof is the life thereof.
> —Deuteronomy xii. 23.[1]

The reference to Abel's blood calling for vengeance from the ground[2] was, for the original readers of the passage, not the violent metaphor which it appears to us. The shed blood of Abel was regarded as his expelled soul. The idea of the blood as the seat of life and consciousness is clearly, also, the source of one Old Testament idiom which often misleads the unwary. The heart, being the center of the blood stream, was naturally assumed to be the center of the whole inner life of man, and in particular the seat of thought. Hence the word "heart" is used as a synonym for "mind":

> And Samson told her all that was in his heart,
> —Judges xvi. 17.

i.e., all that he knew;

> As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.
> —Proverbs xxiii. 7.

Again, the association of the blood with the life goes far to explain the use of blood in the Old Testament ritual.

[1] *Cf.* also Genesis ix. 4 and Leviticus xvii. 11.
[2] Genesis iv. 10.

But it is obvious, if one runs down the word "blood" and its derivatives in a concordance, that the identification of the soul with the blood is already in the Old Testament an antiquated notion. Many common forms of expression are clearly traceable to it—the commonest Hebrew word for "life" or "self" (*nephesh*) is etymologically connected with a Semitic root meaning "blood"—but we gain the impression that these are for the most part established idioms whose literal meaning is half forgotten.

It is quite otherwise with the second theory, that which identifies the soul with the breath. That remained a living conception right down to New Testament times, as is shown for instance in the untranslatable passage,

> The wind (*pneuma*) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born—
> —St. John iii. 8.

our Authorized Version translates "of the Spirit," but the original (*ek tou pneumatos*) might equally well be translated "of the wind." The whole argument of the verse depends upon the fact that the word for wind and the word for spirit are identical. Incidentally this reminds us that the identification of the soul with the breath was not confined to the Hebrews. The common words for soul in Greek[3] (*pneuma,*

[3]Greek also employs words for "soul," especially in its emotional aspects, which are clearly traceable to the identification of life with the blood, e.g., καρδία (heart), ἧπαρ (liver, an especially bloody organ), σπλάγχνα (viscera, especially heart and liver).

psyche, thumos) and Latin (*anima, spiritus*) meant originally "breath" or "air," and the same association occurs in other languages. In English, for example, the words "ghost" and "gust" are almost certainly related.

It was indeed an attractive theory. For one thing, it accounted, as the other theory did not, for deaths which were not accompanied by the shedding of blood. Furthermore, it harmonized with the observation that the soul is invisible. As one watches a death one cannot see the soul escape. It could be used also to explain many things, particularly when taken in conjunction with the natural assumption that God Himself possessed (or, as came to be held in later times, *was*) a spiritual substance.

To an age which knew nothing of a nervous system, it explained the phenomena of mental derangement. An insane person was regarded as one who was "beside himself," i.e., one whose soul was outside him; if his soul were in place, he would not act so strangely. Or another explanation was possible: The madman's soul was in place—as was shown by the partial rationality of his actions—but it had to struggle with another soul. This is the explanation given for Saul's madness:

> An evil[4] spirit from Jehovah troubled him. . . . And it came to pass when the spirit from God was upon Saul, that

[4]The word "evil" here has no moral connotation. It simply means "faulty" or "injurious." *Cf.* the verse "an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit," where we were better to translate, a "faulty" tree.

> David took the harp and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit departed from him.
> —I Samuel xvi. 14.[5]

It explained equally well the presence of extraordinary ability in men. Thus Samson's ability to break the ropes with which the Philistines bound him is accounted for by the fact that

> the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him.
> —Judges xv. 14.

The fervor of patriotic enthusiasm which enabled Saul to arouse the dispirited Israelites to go to the help of Jabesh Gilead is similarly accounted for in I Samuel xi.6. The artistic skill of Bezaleel, the artist who adorned the Tabernacle, is represented as residing, not in his own spirit but in the Spirit of God:

> I (Jehovah) have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge and in all manner of workmanship.—Exodus xxxi. 3.

It furnished a theory of prophecy. The fact that the prophet was enabled to declare the divine will and purposes was accounted for on the ground that the prophet was not speaking of himself, but was simply acting as the mouthpiece of the divine spirit. Hence the prophets' habit of speaking in Jehovah's name. This theory of prophecy is of course almost world-wide. The prophetess at Delphi, for example, was assumed to be simply the mouthpiece of Apollo. That the prophet should at times speak wildly, and even

[5] *Cf.* also xviii. 10, xix. 9.

incoherently, was on this explanation only natural. Frail human organs must be expected to tremble and behave erratically when subjected to the mighty impulses of a divine soul.

Finally, it was capable of explaining the relation of God and man. The breath of life in man could be regarded as derived from the spirit or breath of God. This theory is implied in the creation story of the second chapter of Genesis:

> And Jehovah formed man (*sc.* his body) of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul;—Genesis ii. 7.

also in the familiar words of the Preacher:

> Then shall the dust return to the earth as is was,
> And the spirit shall return to God who gave it.
> —Ecclesiastes xii. 7.

The important part which this conception played in the religious both of the Orient and of the Greco-Roman world will engage our attention later on.

It will be observed from the illustrations which we have quoted that the word "spirit," as the Hebrews and other ancient peoples used it, denoted our inner life as a whole, all that distinguishes the living body from the dead one. It includes indeed more than that which we call mind; it includes physical energy. This is clearly the meaning of the term in the following passages:

> When he (Samson) had drunk, his spirit came again and he revived.—Judges xv. 19.

> And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins, and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water three days and three nights.—I Samuel xxx. 12.

This explains also the use of the term "Spirit of God" as a synonym for God's "energy"; as for instance in the verse,

> Thou sendeth forth Thy Spirit—they are created,
> And Thou renewest the face of the earth.
> —Psalm civ. 30.

To capture the exact meaning of an ancient term is always a precarious and difficult task. We bring to the study of ancient texts modern preconceptions of which we are utterly unconscious, and read into the words connotations which were quite foreign to them. One such error we must sedulously avoid in connection with the word "spirit" or "soul." We use these words as synonyms for consciousness. What consciousness is, we find it very difficult to define—largely because it is the most intimate thing which we know, our very selves. But on one thing we are very clear. We are convinced that it has neither length, breadth, nor weight; in other words, that it is not material. Such a conception of spirit was too abstract, too negative, for the ancients, even for the philosophers of Greece. Ancient man thought, as children think, in images; and the mind can image to itself only material things. They took for granted that spirit was a form of matter—an invisible, highly mobile, and very attenuated form of matter, doubtless, but matter none

the less, localized and possessed of spatial form. On occasion, in the case of dreams and apparitions for instance, men believed that they *saw* spirits.

Inasmuch as the conception of spirit which we have been describing held undisputed sway both among Jews and Gentiles in the first century of our era,[6] it inevitably molded the thought of the early Christians and the New Testament writers.

Thus we find in the New Testament the root idea, that the living body is distinguished from the dead one by the indwelling of a soul.[7] The idea of demoniac possession is employed, not merely to explain diseases which we should regard as nervous,[8] including what we should recognize as epilepsy,[9] but also deafness and dumbness,[10] debility,[11] and fever.[12] (The Jews of New Testament times, however, refused to believe that any evil spirit was "sent from Jehovah." Evil spirits came from a supreme Spirit of Evil, Satan.) Prophets continued to be thought of as moved in their utterances by the spirit of God, rather than by their own spirits.[13] The Jews of the first century were very

[6]Except that the Stoics regarded the soul as consisting of fire rather than of air. Even so, they thought of it as an attenuated form of matter.

[7]E.g., St. Luke viii. 55, xxiii. 46; Acts vii. 59; St. James ii. 26; Revelations xi. 11.

[8]St. Mark i. 23-27, v. 1-19, vii. 25-30.

[9]St. Mark ix. 17-27.

[10]St. Mark ix. 25; St. Matthew ix. 32.

[11]St. Luke xiii. 11-13.

[12]St. Luke iv. 39.

[13]St. Matthew i. 22 (R. V.), *et passim.*

much disposed to hold that the age of prophecy was passed; but the Christians regarded prophecy as a present fact. Not merely did they regard their leaders as prophets, but every Christian felt himself (the phrase was scarcely a metaphor) "a temple of the Holy Spirit."[14] The new moral energy, the new joy, and the profound change in their whole inner life which they experienced, they interpreted as an impartation of a portion of the divine soul. Finally, the identification of the Spirit of God with the energy of God appears in the language of St. Luke i. 35:

> The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most Highest shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God.

It is very clear that the early Christians, like all the rest of the world in their time, thought of spirit in a way which we can only describe as material. Not merely did they believe in "ghosts," i.e., that spirits either had or might assume definite shapes,[15] but St. Paul's assertion that the resurrection body was to be composed of spirit, not of flesh[16] manifestly implies this view. This furnishes the clue to the solution of a problem which has been the source of much bitter controversy: Is the Holy Spirit in the New Testament regarded as a person or as an influence? The true answer to the question is that the New Testament writers themselves could not have answered it, for

[14] I Corinthians vi. 19.

[15] St. Mark vi. 49; St. Luke xxiv. 37, 39; *cf.* Acts xii. 15.

[16] I Corinthians xv. 44.

they would not have understood the terms in which it is put. Like so many other problems in ancient history, the whole difficulty originates in the attempt to fit ancient thoughts into modern categories. The ancients did not have our conception of personality—of souls as centers of thought, feeling, and will; which are units in the strictest sense, indivisible and incapable of amalgamation. As spirit or soul was thought of more or less as a *mass*, there was nothing inconceivable in the idea that a portion of God's Spirit might join itself to a human spirit. If we must choose one or other horn of the dilemma, we ought probably to say that the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is not a mere influence but (a portion of) God Himself; but the truth is that the ancient and the modern ideas of personality are hardly commensurable.

The Primitive Church not merely inherited from the past a conception of man, an anthropology; it inherited also a cosmology, a conception of the universe.

This cosmology seems to have had its origin in Babylonia. The Babylonians advanced to the conception of a universe unusually early. For the universe is not a conception which necessarily presents itself to man at the beginning, for reasons which are understandable enough if one reflects upon his own experience. How often do we have occasion to think of the universe? Most of our hours and days are taken up with dealing with things and forces *in* the universe, and we have little time to think of the universe as a whole. But—perhaps because of the interest of the Babylonians in the heavens—we find the unity of the

physical universe and the problem of its origin occupying the thoughts of the inhabitants of the lower Tigris-Euphrates valley at the dawn of history, as early as 3000 B.C. For a long time, however, their ideas upon such matters were clothed in a loose and fantastic garb of mythology, although certain important observations were made, notably the distinguishing of the five planets visible to the naked eye. The Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean empire (612-539 B.C.), however, evolved learning and reflection of a more scientific type, and the development of Chaldean science continued for many centuries after the Chaldeans had been subjugated by the Persians (539 B.C.) and the Greeks (331 B.C.).

The Chaldean theory of the world rested upon the following observations: (1) The first report of our senses is that the earth is a flat expanse and the sky a dome.[17] (2) Water descends from the sky in rain and rises through the earth in springs. Whence does it come? Evidently there must be water above the sky and water beneath the earth. The complex of earth and sky must be surrounded by water. (3) The motions of the sun, moon, and stars had to be accounted for. The fixed stars apparently move over the surface of a single dome; but the sun, the moon, and each of the five planets have all their peculiar motions and go their way irrespective of one another

[17]There are indications, to be sure, that the Chaldeans advanced somewhat beyond this first impression, that they recognized that the earth presents a convex surface to the sky. Perhaps the phenomenon of the rise of objects above the horizon as we approach them suggested this refinement.

and of the fixed stars. Each therefore must move over a dome of its own. Thus there must be seven domes overarching the earth, with the dome of the fixed stars over all. (4) Finally, there was the problem of locating the abode of the dead. No primitive people with which we are acquainted has ever thought of death as extinction. The conception of annihilation is a highly abstract conception, and primitive thought is incapable of abstraction. Therefore the soul must go somewhere. There are some indications that the very earliest Semites thought of the soul as accompanying the body to the grave, but for the most part the Semites of historical times believed that souls at death descended to a cavity beneath the surface of the earth, in which they were destined to abide forever. They pictured the state of the soul after death in gloomy colors. Its subterranean abode they thought of as a place of cold and darkness, in which the dead are deprived of all activity, all sensation, of everything in fact except bare existence; for anything which can be termed living was inconceivable to the Semites apart from the body. The Babylonians, of course, shared the common Semitic view of death.

We may represent the Babylonian conception of the universe by the following diagram:

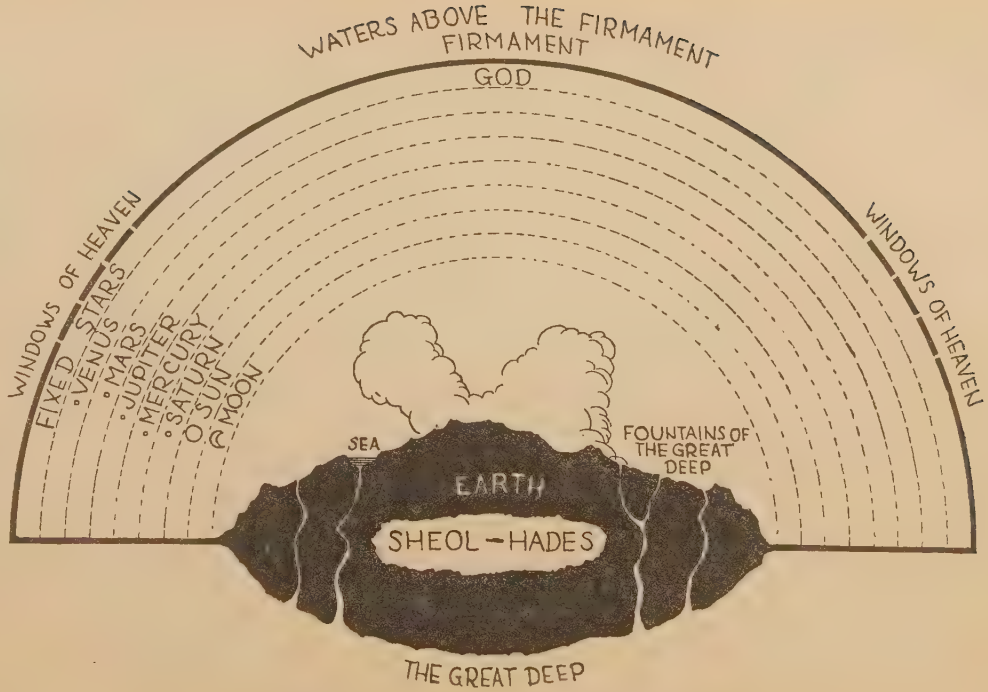

FIGURE I.—THE BABYLONIAN IDEA OF THE UNIVERSE.
The order of the planetary hemispheres is entirely conjectural.

The civilization of Palestine had been subject to Babylonian influences for a millennium before the Hebrews entered it. From the Tel-el-Amarna letters (*c.* 1400 B.C.), we see that the literary and diplomatic language of Palestine in the pre-Hebrew period was Babylonian. Hence it is not surprising to find the cosmology of the Phenicians, the nearest civilized neighbors of the Hebrews, obviously related to that of Babylonia. With the establishment of Assyrian control over Israel in the eighth century B.C., and the carrying off of the Jewish upper classes to Babylon itself in the beginning of the sixth century B.C., the contact of Hebrew with Babylonian thought became increasingly intimate. Inasmuch as the Hebrews were not themselves a scientifically minded people, it is only to be expected that the Old Testament should reflect Babylonian cosmological ideas.

This indeed is the fact. Throughout the Old Testament the common term for "universe" is "the heaven(s) and the earth."[18] In the first chapter of Genesis, the first act of creation is the construction of the heavens, considered as a solid firmament, to separate the waters above the heavens from the waters beneath. The universe thus consists of three parts, "the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth."[19] The earth is "established upon the floods"[20] and is thought of as a disc,[21] on which the

[18]Genesis i. 1, ii. 1, *et passim.*
[19]Exodus xx. 4.
[20]Psalm xxiv. 2.
[21]Isaiah xl. 22.

round heavens[22] are supported on pillars[23] or "foundations."[24] Apparently Rahab[25] and "the serpent,"[26] were originally mythological representatives of the waters under the earth. In the later of the two intertwined stories of the deluge, the flood is accounted for by the fact that "the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up."[27] Sheol, the place of the departed, is very frequently referred to, and always as a place into which the dead descend:

> The land of darkness and of the shadow of death,
> The land dark as midnight,
> Of the shadow of death without any order,
> And where the light is as midnight.
>
> —Job x. 21f.[28]

It is true that the notion of seven heavens has left no trace on the Old Testament. But there is some doubt whether this refinement did not arise quite late in Babylonia itself; and the notion is set forth in detail in the post-canonical literature of Judaism, so that there can be no question that it was prevalent in the time of Christ.

[22]Job xxii. 14; Proverbs viii. 27.

[23]Job xxvi. 11.

[24]II Samuel xxii. 8.

[25]Isaiah li. 9ff.; Job xxvi. 12ff.

[26]Amos ix. 3.

[27]Genesis vii. 11, viii. 2. Other references to this theory of rain are to be found in II Chronicles vi. 26; Psalm cxlviii. 4; Malachi iii. 10; and to water as ascending from below in Proverbs iii. 20.

[28]*Cf.* also Genesis xxxvii. 35; Numbers xvi. 30, 33; Job vii. 9, *et passim.*

The Old Testament picture of the world makes one noteworthy addition to the Babylonian. Jewish monotheism demanded a place in the universe for God. Accordingly, God is represented in the exilic and post-exilic portions of the Old Testament as enthroned in the heavens at the zenith:

> I saw the Lord sitting on His throne and all the host of heaven sitting by Him on His right hand and on His left.
> —I Kings xxii. 19.

God is described by Second Isaiah as,

> He that sitteth above the circle of the earth,
> And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers;
> That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
> And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.
> —Isaiah xl. 22.

In the Book of Job Eliphaz the Temanite accuses Job of arguing,

> Is not God in the height of heaven?
> And behold the height of the stars, how high they are!
> * * * * * *
> Can He judge through the thick darkness:
> Thick clouds are a covering to Him, so that He seeth not,
> And He walketh on the vault of heaven.
> —Job xxii. 12ff.

An excellent summary of the Old Testament cosmology as a whole may be found in Proverbs viii. 27-29.[29]

Jesus and his disciples were nurtured on the Old Testament and the ideas of later Judaism. Hence

[29] Quoted below on p. 141.

it is to be expected that their ideas of the physical universe should correspond to those which we have outlined. In the New Testament "heaven and earth" or "the heavens and the earth" is still the common expression for the universe.[30] The elect are to be gathered "from one end of the heavens to the other."[31] St. Paul was caught up in a vision into "the third heaven."[32] God is described as "our Father which art in heaven" in the Lord's Prayer, in the Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere in the first three Gospels. The underground abode of the dead is referred to.[33] Finally, the whole conception of Christ's death, descent into Hades, ascent into heaven, session at the right hand of God, and second coming in the clouds obviously involves this conception of the universe.

It may not be amiss to emphasize that none of these anthropological and cosmological ideas is peculiarly Hebrew. They do not belong to the essence, but only provide the conceptual dress, of the Hebrew and the Christian religious message.

[30]St. Matthew v. 18, xxviii. 18; St. Mark xiii. 31; I Corinthians viii. 5; Ephesians i. 10, iii. 15; Philippians ii. 10; Colossians i. 16, 20; Revelations xx. 11; xxi. 1.

[31]St. Matthew xxiv. 31.

[32]II Corinthians xii. 2.

[33]St. Matthew xi. 23, xvi. 18; St. Luke xvi. 23; Acts ii. 27, 31; Romans x. 7; Ephesians iv. 9; Revelations i. 18, vi. 8, xx. 13f.

CHAPTER III

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY: B. RELIGIOUS

A Definition of Religion—The Genius of the Hebrew People for Religion—*Four Essential Elements in Hebrew Religion* and their Evolution: (1) Optimism, or a Conviction of the Love of God; (2) Conscience, or the Identification of Morality with Religion; (3) Monotheism; the Consolidation of These First Three Elements in the Law and the Messianic Hope, and in the Teachings of the Second Isaiah; (4) a Church—*Characteristics of Later Judaism:* (1) A Religious Leveling Up, (2) Missionary Enthusiasm, (3) Dependence upon Tradition, (4) Overemphasis upon the Transcendence of God, (5) A Pessimistic View of the Present Universe, (6) The Apocalyptic Hope—The Immediate Religious Background of Primitive Christianity.

In addition to the scientific ideas illustrated in the last chapter, there were of course a large number of religious convictions inherited by the early Christians from Judaism. The first Christians, it must be remembered, were Jews by race, and in the beginning regarded themselves as Jews in religion also, differing from their fellow Jews only in that they held that the expected Messiah had already come. Some of these ideas were soon discarded, but many of them remain in the very fiber of Christianity; for the Christian religion is in large part only the logical fulfilment of the religion of the Old Testament. Hence in order to understand the apostolic gospel of which the Apostles' Creed is a summary, it will be necessary to review in

outline the story of Hebrew religion as scholars now tell it.

At the outset, it may be well to clear up our ideas as to what religion is by attempting to frame a definition of it which will apply to ancient religions as well as to modern.

One truth must have been borne in upon man as soon as he began to think at all, namely, that of his dependence upon realities external to himself. This basic fact in human experience is the root from which religion springs. For religion is essentially the effort to establish harmonious relations with the Great Without, our dependence upon which is so manifest. Religion therefore is and must ever be coextensive with humanity. Religion must necessarily have an intellectual as well as a practical side; for one cannot actively strive for harmony with external reality without some belief as to the nature of that reality. A working conception as to the character and will of the Divine no man can either dispense with or avoid. Even if one holds that there is no purpose governing the world, that we are the sport of blind and heartless chance, that is in itself an assertion as to the nature of external reality, a theology, albeit perhaps a materialistic theology. Consciously or subconsciously, every man's life is based upon views which can only be described as religious, and it is a matter of decisive importance what a man's *real* religion is. It is necessary to stress the word "real," for alas in the case of most of us the religion which really dominates our lives is not always the religion which we profess.

The genius of the ancient Hebrews lay wholly in the sphere of religion. Their one contribution to civilization consisted in the discovery of the working conceptions as to the character and requirements of God on which wholesome living depends; a discovery which, like all true discoveries, must be regarded from the religious point of view as a revelation. Why the Hebrews should have accomplished this mission better than any other ancient people it is impossible completely to explain. It is easy to see that geography made the ancient Hebrews peculiarly the prey of circumstances over which they could have no control, and hence peculiarly sensible of their dependence on the Great Without. A little people, inhabiting a land poor in natural resources, their home lay on one of the main thoroughfares of the ancient world. All the conquerors of ancient times made their appearance sooner or later in Palestine; for Palestine was a strategic point, both from the military and from the commercial point of view. The fortunes of Palestine have always been determined from without herself, by the course of world politics. But geography alone will not explain the interest of the Hebrews in religion, far less their achievements in that domain. Else why has not Palestine continued to be the home of religious thought in subsequent times; and above all, why did the Hebrews possess that characteristic of ever hoping against hope which enabled them to derive only enrichment of faith from a succession of disasters? Who can say? "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth."

The contributions of the Hebrews to the religion

of mankind may be said to have been four: the conviction of the love of God, the identification of religion with morality, monotheism, and individual religion coupled with the conception of a church. Each of these features of the religion of the Old Testament may be paralleled to a greater or less degree in other ancient religions; but the Hebrews grasped them with a vividness and intensity which no other people displayed; and as a matter of historic fact, it was from Hebrew religion that these vital elements passed into Christianity, and thus into the religious consciousness of Europe and of the modern world. We have stated them in the order in which they emerged in the Hebrew mind, an order which is highly significant.

The earliest and most fundamental religious conviction of the Hebrews was that of the *love of God* for them. The root from which the whole of Hebrew religion sprang is expressed in the phrase which so commonly recurs in the Old Testament, "Jehovah,[1] the God of Israel."

The Hebrews' own tradition regarding the origin of their faith in Jehovah is in its essentials entirely credible and explains the facts. Reading between the lines of the record, we can see that Jehovah was originally the spirit which animated the storms which gathered about the top of Mount Sinai. It was in the neighborhood of Sinai that Moses met Him, and was commissioned to return to his countrymen in Egypt and announce that Jehovah was prepared to deliver

[1]Our Authorized Version uniformly substitutes for the name "Jehovah" in the original the words "the Lord." *Vide infra,* p. 76.

them. From two of the three strands of narrative discernible in the story as we have it in the Book of Exodus, we gather that Moses, and therefore the Hebrews generally, had been unacquainted with Jehovah hitherto. The deliverance was accomplished; and the natural phenomena which facilitated the escape[2] were regarded by the Hebrews as the work of Jehovah. Moses' message was thus confirmed by the event; and the Hebrews sought out Jehovah at His residence on Mount Sinai and entered into a covenant with Him, whereby He became their national god.

The covenant at Sinai was the real beginning of Hebrew religion, and indeed of the Hebrew national consciousness. It impressed upon Hebrew religion at the very outset its two peculiar characteristics, *optimism* and *conscience*. The deliverance which they had undergone convinced them that Jehovah was a "living" god, one who could be relied upon visibly and actively to intervene on their behalf in all times of danger. Their future, therefore, was secure. Yet it was implied in very idea of a covenant that Jehovah's support was not unconditional, that His loyalty to His people must be met by loyalty on its part to Him. There were doubtless from the first many among the Hebrews who were half-hearted or worse toward Moses and Moses' god. The stories of the "murmurings" in the wilderness reflect a situation which must have

[2]The oldest strand of our narrative justifies the surmise that the plagues were the result of an unusually high Nile, and the same narrative expressly states that the drying up of the Red Sea was due to a long-continued, strong east wind.

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existed. Yet these struggles only intensified the loyalty of Moses and his adherents to Jehovah, and the spirit of Moses was destined to prevail. It became an ingrained element in the Hebrew religious consciousness that Jehovah demanded an absolute and undivided devotion, that He alone must be Israel's god.

We have good reason to think that the religious notions of Israel in Moses' day were still what we should regard as very crude. Our knowledge of Mosaic times, to be sure, is all derived from documents of a much later date, the earliest of which was probably composed, on the basis of oral tradition, a century or more after the death of Solomon. But we have an ancient song which furnishes a contemporary picture of religion and social conditions in Israel not long after the entry into Canaan—the Song of Deborah.[3]

The circumstances which gave rise to this splendid ode were briefly these: The Hebrew tribes had as yet succeeded in winning only the open hill country. The towns, and particularly the towns in the fertile plain of Esdraelon, they found it impossible to capture; partly because they were surrounded by walls, and partly because the light-armed sons of the desert were powerless against the Canaanite war-chariots. Eventually, however, the Hebrew tribes, and in particular the tribes settled in the vicinity of the plain of Esdraelon, made a concerted attack upon the allied Canaanites under Sisera. The battle took place in the

[3]Judges v.

low meadows along the river Kishon. On the eve of the engagement a storm broke, which swelled the Kishon and rendered the battlefield a morass. The result was that the chariots could not operate; their wheels stuck fast in the mud, and not all the frantic plungings of the horses could move them. This enabled the Hebrew footmen to overwhelm them. The Canaanites suffered an overthrow from which they never recovered; and the plain of Esdraelon, the garden of Palestine, fell into Hebrew hands. The Hebrews saw in these events a signal proof of Jehovah's power and loyalty. In the storm which made the victory possible they recognized a divine intervention. Jehovah had come with His thunder and rain from His home on Sinai to the aid of His people, and the Song exalts of His faithfulness.

Now at first sight this is pure paganism. The Jehovah of the Song of Deborah is not God, as we have learned to think of God. He is not omnipresent, but resides upon a particular mountain. He is not the creator of the world, but a force in the world—indeed little more than a personification of the storm. He is not the god of all men, but simply the war god of Israel; and the god of the nation as a whole, not of the individual Israelite. Moreover, there is nothing in the Song to indicate that other nations might not have each its own god to defend its interests. As a matter of fact, we have evidence that the Hebrews long believed that every nation had its own god.[4] Je-

[4] *Cf.* Judges xi. 19-29; Micah iv. 5.

hovah is not even moral. He approves the treacherous assassination of Sisera by Jael, an act which violated the most sacred of all moral principles in ancient society, the law of hospitality. His "righteousness" (verse 11) consists simply in His readiness to do His duty by His people. If we were to judge from the Song alone, we might conclude that the object of His hate was believed at this period to be, not sin, but Israel's national foes.

In their religious ideas, therefore, the Hebrews of Deborah's time stood wholly upon a plane with their neighbors. In some respects, indeed, the religious ideas of the early Hebrews were inferior to those of some of their more highly civilized contemporaries. More than a thousand years before the Song of Deborah was composed, the Babylonians had arrived at the conception of a creation, though not at that of a single creator; and some four hundred years before, Ikhnaton in Egypt had preached pure monotheism. In one respect only were the Hebrews peculiar; that was in the absoluteness of their trust in the love of their god. This, and not any peculiarity in their conception of deity, was the root from which the whole subsequent development of Hebrew religion sprang. For the history of Hebrew religion, as we shall see, is the history not of a philosophy but of a loyalty. The peculiar gift of the Hebrew was not the gift of superior intellect but the gift of character.

The second major conviction at which Hebrew religion arrived was that of the *identity of religion and morality.*

From the very beginning, doubtless, Jehovah like other national deities was regarded as the avenger of breaches of the national customary law. In the eighteenth chapter of Exodus we have a lifelike picture of Moses, as the prophet of Jehovah, administering justice in Jehovah's name. But the thought of Jehovah as demanding justice between Israelite and Israelite was hard to retain. The idea lay very nigh to all ancient peoples that what the gods demanded was chiefly homage and sacrifice.

The settlement of the Hebrews in Canaan brought with it peculiar temptations to social injustice. It transformed the nation from a nomadic to an agricultural people; and that involved the establishment of private property and the division of society into rich and poor. As in Athens in the days of Solon, and as in Rome in the days of the Patrician supremacy and again in the days of the Gracchi, so now among the Hebrews, we find a class of large landholders, which monopolized political power. Everywhere in the ancient world, at this stage of economic development, the fate of the small landholder was the same. Where his rich neighbor did not simply steal his land by force or fraud, he lent him money, and, when the debt fell due and was not paid, took his farm. Then, when hard times came again and the one thus dispossessed had once more to apply to his rich neighbor for help, he had nothing to offer as security but his liberty. This time failure to pay meant that he became a slave. If at any step in the process the debtor protested, his only recourse was to a court made up of members of the

oppressing class. Thus the tendency was for the rich to become richer, and the poor poorer; and the prospect was that the nation would ultimately come to consist of a few inordinately rich families supported by a population of serfs.

In the first half of the eighth century, this danger reached its height. In both of the two kingdoms into which the Hebrews were now divided, prosperity reigned, as a result of the westward advance of the Assyrians. For the approach of Assyria brought unwonted peace to the little states of the Mediterranean coast. Their conflicts ceased in the face of the common danger. Damascus became the ally, instead of the oppressor, of the Hebrews, and the result was what George Adam Smith has picturesquely styled "Israel's Indian Summer." Wealth, particularly among the upper classes, rapidly increased. All seemed well; and official Israel (i.e., the aristocracy) thronged the shrines to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving to Jehovah and thought itself very religious indeed. As far as Assyria was concerned, it felt quite secure; for Jehovah, won by the faithful performance of His sacrifices, would certainly defend His People from the Assyrians, as in old time He had delivered the fathers out of the hands of the Egyptians. It would be faithless to doubt.

Yet there were some that did doubt. Particularly among those of the Hebrews who still lived the old pastoral life, there were many to whom the new order of things was an offense. The new luxury shocked their conservatism, and above all the injustices prac-

ticed by the aristocracy roused their indignation. Jehovah, Moses had taught, demanded justice in Israel. Must He not punish, or even totally destroy, the nation now that it was so polluted with wrong? Must not the oncoming Assyrian be the "rod of His anger"?[5] Such was the conviction of Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah; and the Assyrian conquest of Palestine, when it came, and the total destruction of the northern of the two kingdoms in 722 B.C. seemed to prove that they were right. As a result, the idea of Jehovah as requiring above all things righteous dealing between man and man became burned into the national consciousness. "Wherewith," Micah asked,

> shall I come before Jehovah
> And bow myself before the High God?
> Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
> With calves a year old?
> Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams,
> Or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
> Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
> The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
> He hath showed thee, O man, what is good,
> And what doth Jehovah require of thee,
> But to do justly, and to love kindness,
> And to walk humbly with thy God!
>
> —Micah vi. 6-8.

This and similar expressions of the eighth-century prophets fixed themselves in the national memory, and their social teachings became embodied in the Law of Jehovah as set forth in the Deuteronomic Code.

[5]Isaiah x. 5.

The third outstanding characteristic of Hebrew religion was *monotheism*; and it seems strange at first that the Hebrews should have arrived at monotheism so late. Had the Hebrew prophets been philosophers, they might have evolved a monotheistic theory of the universe long before they did. For it is apparent to us, as we look back, that monotheism was implicit in Hebrew religion from the first. Jehovah could be the sole god of Israel only if He were able to supply all Israel's needs, and to do that He must be the Lord of all. The Hebrews, however, were slow to see this logical necessity. They had to be driven to it step by step. The peculiar gift of the Hebrew People, as we have said, was not the gift of superior intellect, but the gift of character. The Hebrew genius was a genius for loyalty and trust; and it was only experience which compelled them, not without reluctance, to enlarge their conception of Him in whom they trusted.

For some time after their settlement in Canaan, they still continued, as we have seen, to think of Jehovah as resident on Sinai, and as the god of the storm and the war god of Israel. But once they became an agricultural people, they realized the need of divine assistance in other spheres than war. They required a god who would grant them the increase of the soil. For this purpose many at first turned to the gods worshipped by the Canaanites, their instructors in the arts of agriculture. In so doing they were not conscious of disloyalty to Jehovah. They still trusted in Jehovah as their war god, but for the fruits of Canaan it seemed natural to appeal to the gods of Canaan. (One is not

disloyal to one's grocer because one buys one's meat from the butcher.) But the true Israelite refused to have any god but Jehovah; and the necessary result was that the functions of the Canaanitish Baalim came to be ascribed to Jehovah. Jehovah thus became the god of agriculture and the lord of Palestine; without ceasing, of course, to be the national protector in time of war.

The approach of Assyria led to a further amplification of the Hebrew conception of Jehovah. The teaching of Amos and his fellows that Assyria was the rod of Jehovah's anger involved the discovery that His power extended over other nations and lands. The inference that His power was world-wide lay near at hand; but the prophets were not theorists, and it is questionable whether they drew it. Seemingly, it was not until the period of the Assyrian supremacy that monotheism in the strict sense arose.

For it seems almost certain that the Hebrews arrived at monotheism through contact with Babylonian thought, and the probability is that that contact was mediated by Assyria. In the domain of culture, the Assyrians were the pupils of the Babylonians, just as later the Romans were of the Greeks. From the Babylonians the Hebrews learned that the heavenly bodies were the determining forces in human destiny, and in Babylonian mythology they were brought face to face with the conceptions of a universe and of creation. These new ideas presented a problem to Hebrew faith. If the earth were dominated by the stars, and if the universe were the creation of other

deities than Jehovah, then Jehovah could no longer, in the light of these facts, remain the sole god of Israel. The stars and the gods who made the world must be the supreme objects of worship. We learn from the Second Book of Kings and elsewhere that, as a matter of fact, very many Hebrews at this time did take to worshiping the heavenly bodies—among them, doubtless, Marduk, to whom the Babylonians assigned the chief part in creation. But history repeated itself. The spirit of loyalty to Jehovah again protested, although faith had to take a bold flight to meet the emergency. It had to insist that Jehovah Himself was the Lord of the hosts of heaven and the Maker of heaven and earth.

The result was a grander conception of creation than the Babylonian. For in the Babylonian creation myths, a whole array of gods, practically the whole Babylonian pantheon, participate in bringing the world into existence, and creation is represented as the result of strife and jealousy among them. The Hebrew conception, on the other hand, brings us into the presence of one Creator, and traces creation to the love of God for mankind, and specifically for Israel. Moreover, owing to the fact that it was the outcome of a loyalty rather than of philosophic reflection, Hebrew monotheism was more than a theory; it was a religious conviction which profoundly influenced the national life.

Thus by the beginning of the sixth century, the best Hebrew thought had arrived at these ultimate pos-

tulates of all true religion and morality: the belief in a God of love, the belief that He requires righteous dealing between man and man, and the belief that He has full power to protect His own. This lofty faith, however, was far from permeating the whole people as yet. Both among the governing classes and among the populace, alien cults—Canaanitish, Babylonian, and other—were still prevalent, as the sermons of Jeremiah and Ezekiel abundantly show. Moreover, the religion of Israel was still essentially a national religion: the nation, not the individual, was still thought to be the immediate object of Jehovah's care, although we can see the dawn of individual religion in the personal experience of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The winning of the whole nation to the teaching of the prophets and the transformation of religion into an affair of the individual soul were to be the next steps in the development.

These steps cost a fearful price, no less a price than the destruction of the Hebrew state. About 612 B.C. the Assyrian Empire was overthrown. While it was in its last throes, the Egyptians made themselves masters of Judah, only to be driven out by the Babylonians a few years later. Then relying upon Egyptian assistance, the Jews rebelled against the Babylonians. Consequently, in 597 B.C. the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem, carried off into captivity the king and upper classes, and set up another king in Judah. In a few years this king in turn rebelled, and in 586 B.C. the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem again. This

time they made a full end. They razed the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem to the ground, and there was another deportation, which left only the peasants behind. Deprived of their natural leaders, it was expected that the peasants would be helpless; and they were needed to till the soil and produce taxes for the Babylonian exchequer. Nevertheless, even among this poor remnant a puny insurrection occurred, with the result that Judah was still more thoroughly ruined. From that day to this the Hebrews have never known political unity; they have been a scattered people.

In the case of almost any other people, this would have resulted in a quick disappearance of the national religion; for the evidence seemed convincing that Jehovah had been either unable or unwilling to protect His own, and therefore had shown Himself unworthy of worship. Doubtless at this time many Jews did throw over the religion of Jehovah, but there was a nucleus in whom faith triumphed and discovered an explanation for the catastrophe. The spirit in which this nucleus met the situation is eloquently expressed in the Book of Lamentations. The destruction of the nation had been foretold by Jeremiah and Ezekiel; consequently, they argued,

Jehovah hath but done what He purposed,
He hath but fulfilled His word.

* * * * * *

Wherefore doth a living man complain,
A man that is in his sins?
Let us search and try our ways,
And turn again unto Jehovah;

Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.
We have transgressed and have rebelled.

* * * * * *

It is of Jehovah's loving kindness that we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.

—Lamentations ii. 17, iii. 39-42, 22.

Thus was the Hebrew faith in Jehovah saved by the Hebrew conscience.

In consequence optimism revived. Israel had only to return unto Jehovah and Jehovah would return unto her. Jehovah would remove her oppressors, bring back the exiles, Jerusalem and the Temple would rise again more beautiful than before, the very soil of Judah would be renovated and give forth unheard-of harvests, and the national existence would be resumed. A king of the native House of David, worthy of the traditional royal titles "Son of God" and "Anointed[6] of Jehovah," would rule with justice over a happy people, and not over the Jews alone but over all the nations of the earth.

There is something pathetic about this simple faith. When we remember the political impossibilities it involved, it seems a childish dream. But we have the best of warrant for the statement that it is to the childlike that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs, and certainly there was nothing unreal about the reformation which the dream inspired. In the land of their exile,

[6]The word in Hebrew is *Messiah,* of which the Greek translation is *Christos.* Hence the hope outlined above is usually known as the Messianic Hope, to distinguish it from the later Apocalyptic Hope to be described further on.

and perhaps also in their ruined home-land, the Jews sought out and reëdited the sternest words of the prophets, and set themselves in all earnestness to write down in black and white their best recollection and best perception of the will of Jehovah in order that they might obey it. An era of code-making set in; and inasmuch as these codes were not consciously thought of as new, but as only codifications of the national law, which tradition ascribed to Moses, the codes themselves were attributed to Moses. History abounds in parallels. In precisely similar fashion the Romans traced all their religious institutions to Numa, the Spartans their social institutions to Lycurgus, and the English after the Norman conquest referred to their native law as "the good customs of Edward the Confessor."

The faith of the pre-exilic prophets was thus rescued. Indeed, in the great prophet whose name is lost but whose writings are preserved for us in the appendix to the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah xl-lxvi), it was formulated in new clearness and grandeur. The circumstances under which this prophet (usually known, for want of a better appellation, as the "second Isaiah") wrote his book were probably these:[7]

[7]Scholars of the last generation generally held the view that the Second Isaiah wrote in Babylon in the years just preceding the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus in 539 B. C. On this hypothesis only chapters xl-lv could be his composition; for the last chapters of the Book of Isaiah clearly refer to conditions in Jerusalem in the period after the rebuilding of the Temple. Recent scholarship, however, regards the Second Isaiah himself as writing in Jerusalem in this latter period, and is inclined to reckon with the possibility that some parts of chapters lvi-lxvi may be his composition.

In 539 B.C. the Babylonian domination of Palestine gave way to the Persian. Not long after, in 531 B.C., the Persian Empire was shaken temporarily by a war of succession. This gave the Jews in Palestine heart, for they saw in this apparent weakening of the power of their masters an intervention of Jehovah and the dawn of the promised deliverance. To make sure of Jehovah's favor they rebuilt the Temple and reëstablished the cultus. But in brief space Darius overwhelmed his rivals and proved the greatest of the Persian kings. The Persian Empire was reorganized and put upon a firmer basis than ever before, and in their bitter disappointment the Jews almost abandoned hope. It was this crisis, apparently, which evoked the prophet.

His book opens with a message of hope:

Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God.
Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her
That her time of servitude is accomplished,
That her punishment is complete,
That she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins.
—Isaiah xl. 1f.

But what possible basis was there for hope? A Persian governor was residing in Judah, backed by the resources of an empire which included the whole Oriental world. The Jewish nation was impotent. Jerusalem was an unwalled town. Its commercial and industrial possibilities have always been negligible, except when it has been a political capital or a much frequented shrine. At this time it was almost deserted. At least we know that Nehemiah some decades

later had to drive in Levites from the fields to care for the Temple services and to draft farmers to guard its rebuilt walls. The sadly diminished territory of Judah was a little stretch of rocky upland, with only patches here and there good for anything save pasture; inhabited by a few thousands of poor peasants ground to earth by Persian tax-gatherers, and still more by heartless and half-heathenized landlords of their own race. In foreign lands, it is true, Jews were prospering, but they were too scattered for political action. The very thought of a national restoration, therefore, might be regarded as an affront to common sense.

Yet the prophet believed that restoration was imminent, and vented scorn upon the "blind eyes" and "deaf ears" of those who rejected the announcement. For Israel's god was Jehovah—where was the bill of Israel's divorcement[8]—and Jehovah was

He that sitteth above the circle of the earth,
And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers;
That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in;
That bringeth princes to nothing,
And maketh the kings of the earth as a thing of naught.

* * * * * *

To whom, then, will ye liken me,
That I should be like unto him, saith the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes and see!
Who hath created these (*sc.* the stars),
And bringeth out their host by name?
By the greatness of His might,
And for that He is great in power,

[8]Isaiah l. i.

Not one is lacking.
Why sayest thou, O Jacob,
And speakest, O Israel,
My way is hid from Jehovah,
And the justice due me is passed away from my God?
Hast thou not known?
Hast thou not heard?
The everlasting God, Jehovah,
The creator of the ends of the earth,
Fainteth not, neither is weary.
There is no searching of his understanding.

—Isaiah xl. 22f., 25f.

Thus in the Second Isaiah does the idea of Jehovah as the creator and sustainer of the physical universe reach full and ample recognition. In fact, all three of the elements in the religion of Israel which we have been considering receive in his writings the fullest and most ample expression: *God's love,*

Can a woman forget her sucking child,
That she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee.

—Isaiah xlix. 15.

God's insistence upon righteousness between man and man,

Is not this the fast that I have chosen?
To loose all wrongful bonds,
To undo the bands of the yoke and to let the oppressed go free,
And that ye break every yoke?
Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,
And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?

When thou seest the naked, that thou clothe him,
And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?
—Isaiah lviii. 6f.[9]

as well as *monotheism*: the author is full of sarcastic references to other deities than Jehovah as mere idols.[10]

But the prophet does more than sum up the religious thought of the past. The very clearness with which he grasped the highest faith of his predecessors made him distinctly conscious of the questions which that faith suggested. Why, for instance, should the God of all the earth select one nation as His especial care? The prophet finds the answer in the codes of law which Israel possessed. The fact that Israel had received the law of Jehovah could only mean that she was chosen as "Servant of Jehovah" to proclaim Jehovah's will to other nations. "The isles [a term which in his mouth includes Greece] await Israel's law" (xlii.4). One can imagine the scorn with which the Greeks would have received the statement, had it reached them. As if Greeks had anything to learn from Hebrew barbarians! Yet Hellenism needed, and always will need, Hebraism as its complement. The prophet's assertion was prophetic in the strictest sense. Hellenism and Hebraism were indeed, albeit in times far beyond the horizon of the prophet's thought, to combine in laying the foundation of a fuller civilization than either.

[9]If the date of chapters xl-lv which is assumed in the text be correct, chapter lviii emanates from the period of the Second Isaiah, if not from the Second Isaiah himself.

[10]*Cf.* Isaiah xl. 18ff., xliv. 9ff.

But not all Jews were fitted to be Jehovah's missionaries, for not all Jews were loyal to their God. Strictly, only the righteous among the nation could be regarded as constituting Jehovah's Servant; and that righteous kernal was in evil case. Because of their very loyalty to Jehovah they were distrusted and harassed by the foreign tyrants and their native satellites. The Psalms of the period constantly use the words "the poor" as a synonym for "the righteous."

And that raised a further question: Why should Jehovah allow His Servant thus to suffer? The answer plainly was that those typified by the Servant were suffering for the sins of others. The foreign yoke, under which they, even more than other Jews, were groaning, was admittedly the penalty exacted for the sins of the nation. But of those sins the faithful were guiltless. A just God could not allow their undeserved agonies to go on forever. In the exaltation of the nation which the prophet believed to be imminent, they would receive their recompense. That restoration would be due to the merits of the faithful in Israel. But, since the restoration was to be national, this meant that even the unfaithful members of the nation would share in its fruits. Thus the unrighteous would participate in the rewards of the righteous, even as the righteous had shared the punishment of the unrighteous.

This is the gist of the Second Isaiah's most famous utterance, Isaiah lii. 13-liii. 12, a chapter which the reader must be left to peruse again in his Bible; unless, as is likely, he already knows it by heart. In reading that chapter one is assisting at the birth of a great his-

toric idea, the idea of vicarious atonement; an idea which, twisted and abused as it has been so often by theologians, expresses one of the deep truths of life.

The deliverance for which the Second Isaiah looked did not come. Persian domination continued for a century longer, and only gave place to the domination of Alexander the Great and his successors (332-167 B.C.). Then, after a brief century of precarious independence for the Palestinian Jews under the Maccabees (167-63 B.C.), Palestine like the rest of the world fell under the domination of Rome. The prophet's confident assurance of deliverance was thus falsified. But he had performed one supreme and lasting service. He had summed up and expressed in unforgettable terms the national faith.

But something else was needed for the preservation of Hebrew religion than its definite formulation. A religion implies an organized body of worshipers. Down to 586 B.C. the state had constituted the needed organization; but the destruction of the last Hebrew state and the scattering of the nation throughout the world endangered the existence of the Hebrews as a separate people. That part of the nation which was resident in foreign lands threatened to melt away through intermarriage with the peoples among whom they dwelt or through taking on their manners and their thoughts. That part of it which was left behind in Judah was exposed only in a less degree to the assimilating power of stronger peoples and civilizations. The loss of nationality by Scottish immigrants in America, and the loss of their national language and customs by the Highland Scotch at home, supply

modern analogies which may help us to realize the danger to which the Hebrew people was now exposed. That the danger was real enough is shown by the fact that the Hebrews did practically lose their language. In ordinary intercourse, even among themselves, the Jews in Judah itself came to use Aramaic, which was coming to be the common language of the East. Hebrew sank to the status of Latin in present-day Catholicism: it became simply the language of religion and of scholarship. In the synagogue the Scriptures still continued to be read in the original Hebrew, but it was necessary to translate them as they were read in order that the congregation might understand them. Among the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria, the Hebrew Bible disappeared altogether from general use, and a Greek translation (the Septuagint) took its place.

If, therefore, the nation was to be preserved, an organization was needed which should knit together its scattered members; and that organization could only partake of the nature of a church. For, on the one hand, the only possible basis of such an organization was religion, and adherence to the national religion under the circumstances had to be almost purely a personal matter. The further continuance of the Hebrew nation and of Hebrew religion depended solely upon the loyalty of the individual Jew, and the temptations to disloyalty were many. A Jew had almost everything to gain, so far as comfort and worldly advancement were concerned, by casting in his lot with his neighbors and living as they lived.

Unless supported by institutional bonds, individual loyalty could hardly be expected to stand the test.

The foundation of the Jewish Church was the work of Nehemiah and Ezra. Nehemiah, the cupbearer of the Persian king but a faithful Jew, obtained permission in 444 B.C. to visit Jerusalem and restore the city. By his efforts its walls were rebuilt, the Temple cultus set in order and means provided for its support, aliens driven out of the city, oppression both native and Persian curbed, the observance of the Sabbath enforced, and intermarriage of Jews with foreigners suppressed. His work was completed by the priest Ezra. Ezra, coming to Jerusalem in 397 B.C., introduced the Priestly Code, in which the reformed cultus, the prohibition of intermarriage, and various distinctive Hebrew customs were declared to be the Law of God. Thenceforward the Jews had a home city which they might revisit, and which the Law required that they should revisit once, or even thrice, a year if possible. Thenceforward, also, the Temple sacrifices were offered with the utmost regularity each morning and evening. In these sacrifices every true Jew, whether present or absent, might feel that he had a part; for not merely were they offered in the name of the whole nation, but every Jew, wherever he might be, was required to contribute his half-shekel yearly toward their support. Thenceforward, finally, a sharp line was drawn between Jew and Gentile by a multitude of external observances which the Jewish Law imposed upon the Peculiar People of God.

It is easy in the abstract to criticize later Judaism

for its emphasis upon externalities, upon such things as circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath, abstention from certain foods and avoidance of contact with certain things arbitrarily pronounced "unclean"; above all for its illiberal attitude toward other nations. But that is to disregard the historical situation. The chief peril of the time was that of the "melting-pot," the danger lest the Jewish race be dissolved in the various populations among which it was scattered, and the religion of Jehovah be corrupted and lost through conformity with Gentile customs and ideas. The externalities imposed by Ezra served as a "fence about the Law"; and if we must deplore the exclusiveness, the spiritual pride, the narrowness of sympathy, and above all the placing of petty regulations which had little meaning in themselves on a parity with "the weightier matters of the Law, justice, mercy, and truth," we must bear in mind that without some such "fence" Judaism and the precious gifts with which it was charged would probably have been lost to humanity, and humanly speaking Christianity could never have arisen.

The regulations of Ezra's code had a winnowing effect. By making it hard to be a Jew, they excluded from the nation all but the faithful. They transformed the nation into a "congregation,"[11] a church, of the faithful, to which it required character to adhere and which therefore bred character. As a result, later Judaism displays a marked leveling upward of the

[11]Hebrew *qahal,* translated in the Septuagint as ἐκκλησία, which is the Greek word translated "church" in the New Testament.

national religion. There was no more any question within Judaism of recognizing any God save Jehovah. All relics of paganism—the witchcraft and supersitious practices of the lower classes, as well as the complaisant worship of the deities of their foreign masters by the prosperous—were rooted out. A strong esprit de corps and sense of superiority took possession of the Jew, which lifted him above both polytheism and the more degrading vices. The result was that in character (in the narrow sense of that term) the Jew of Jesus' time stood preëminent among the peoples of the world.

Yet by defining a Jew as one who was loyal to Jehovah, the system of Ezra opened the doors of the Jewish communion to anyone, no matter what his race, who would submit to circumcision and take upon him the obligations of the Mosaic Law. Strange as it may seem, one result of the Ezraic reform was that Judaism became a missionary religion. It began to transcend the barriers of race and to fulfil the dream of the Second Isaiah by winning converts to Judaism among the Gentiles. The Pharisees of Jesus' time would "compass sea and land to make one proselyte,"[12] and it seems likely that the number of recruits which Judaism received from paganism was at times very considerable. Only thus, in Professor Schürer's opinion,[13] can the vastly increased number of Jews in the first century A.D., as compared with the number in Nehemiah's time, be accounted for.

[12]St. Matthew xxiii. 15.

[13]See Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. V, p. 91.

The effort to lift all Jews to a level of faith and conduct befitting the People of God involved, however, a certain loss. The fact that Israel was going to school to Moses and the Prophets led almost necessarily to the substitution of authority and tradition for vision. The feeling grew that the age of revelation lay in the past. From the days of Ezra to the days of John the Baptist, no one dared to believe himself the recipient of a message from Jehovah; or if he did, he felt compelled to write under the name of some prophet or patriarch of olden time in order to win credence for his message. God had spoken to the Fathers—that was the Jew's chief pride—but He no longer spoke directly to men.

Accordingly, the records of the age of revelation were collected, edited, set apart as Holy Scripture, studied, and expounded. Judaism became a religion of a book. In every city in which there were Jews in any number, synagogues arose in which the Law and the Prophets were read and discussed every Sabbath day. In connection with every synagogue a school was maintained for the instruction of the young in the Scriptures. The synagogue officials also exercised disciplinary authority, reproving and punishing (with "forty stripes save one" if necessary) infractions of the Law. A new profession arose, that of the transcriber and interpreter of the Scriptures. Problems of faith and conduct were settled, not by reason or intuition, but by reference to the Sacred Word; and answers to the questions of the new day—including questions of which the writers of that Word had never

dreamed—were extracted from it by a process of allegorical interpretation. The reader will gain a just idea of the method by looking at Galatians iv. 21ff.; for early Christianity inherited from Judaism its attitude toward the Bible and its methods of biblical scholarship. It should be borne in mind, however, that allegorical interpretation was not confined to the Jews. The Greeks interpreted Homer in a similar fashion, and in recent times the present writer has heard the method applied to Shakespeare. It is indeed the only possible method of interpreting an author believed to be omniscient and infallible. Only thus can the reader find in his author all that he, the reader, believes to be true.

Not that thought and literary production entirely ceased in later Judaism. Not merely were the so-called Psalms of Solomon composed in this period, but unquestionably many Psalms in our canonical Psalter also. An era which could produce such expressions of devotion cannot be said to have lacked genuine piety. Indeed, two entirely new forms of literature were developed, that named by modern scholars the "Wisdom Literature" and that named the "Apocalyptic Literature." The first type is represented in the Old Testament by Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and certain of the Psalms, and in the Apocrypha by the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus) and the Wisdom of Solomon. The authors of these works do not profess to be inspired mouthpieces of Jehovah, but students of life and conduct. Yet their contributions to religious thought and practical ethics were

highly important. They must be numbered among the precursors of Jesus as regards his ethical teaching, while in the domain of theology the Church, as we shall see, became deeply indebted to them.

The belief that the age of revelation was past was intimately related to another characteristic of later Judaism, the sense that Jehovah's hand was no longer traceable in the affairs of life. For Hebrew faith had lost its early freshness. God was no longer to the later Jew the near and "living" God that He had been in the days of the nation's youth, when Deborah had recognized Jehovah in the storm which swelled the Kishon, or when David had heard Him marching through the mulberry trees[14] and had believed that he could consult Him at any time by means of the sacred lot.[15]

In part this was the result of monotheism itself. In the Second Isaiah the thought of the greatness of God had begotten hope. In most minds the effect was different: it bred only awe and a feeling of remoteness. It seemed incredible that the Most High should

[14]II Samuel v. 23f.

[15]According to I Samuel xxviii. 6, the channels through which Jehovah communicated His will in the days of Saul and David were dreams, prophets, and the Urim and Thummim. It is clear from the Septuagint version of I Samuel xiv. 41, which undoubtedly gives the original text of the passage, that the Urim and Thummim were lots. The Septuagint reads, "If the guilt be in me or in Jonathan my son, Jehovah God of Israel, give Urim; if the guilt is in Thy people Israel, give Thummim." Instances of the use of the sacred lot in the earliest Saul and David narratives are frequent; e.g., I Samuel xxiii. 2-4, 9-12, xxx. 7f.; II Samuel ii. 1f., v. 19.

condescend to intercourse with men, who seen from the altitude of His throne were "as grasshoppers."

This feeling expressed itself in various ways; in the avoidance of Jehovah's personal name, for example. The name Jehovah was avoided, not merely in ordinary conversation, but even in the reading of the Bible. In reading the Scriptures, where the name occurred, circumlocutions such as "the Lord" were substituted for it. This custom was evidently well established by the second century B.C.; for "Jehovah" is uniformly translated by "the Lord" in the Greek rendering of the Old Testament which we know as the Septuagint. From the Septuagint the custom passed into the Latin Vulgate, and from the Vulgate into our Authorized Version. The use of the divine name disappeared so completely that its very pronunciation was forgotten! For the Hebrew alphabet proper has no vowels. The points beneath the consonants which represent the vowels in our printed Hebrew Bibles were not invented until about 650 A.D. The original text represented the divine name simply by JHVH. The vocalization JeHoVaH therefore is not necessarily original. As a matter of fact, there is reason to believe that these vowels belong, not to these consonants at all, but to the words "my Lord" ('eDoNaI), which was substituted for JHVH when the Scriptures were read aloud; and that the true vocalization is JaHVeH, the word being pronounced "Yahweh."

Other outcomes of the same feeling were the development of a doctrine of angels—it being assumed that the Heavenly King, like an earthly monarch, must

accomplish his purposes on earth not in person but by messengers (Hebrew *mal'akim*, Greek *angeloi*)—and the erection of attributes of God, such as His Glory, His Spirit, His Word, into quasi-independent beings serving as intermediaries between God and earth.

But the remoteness of God from human affairs was suggested also by the facts of life.

> I found Him in the shining of the stars,
> I marked Him in the flowering of His fields,
> But in His ways with men I find Him not.

Arthur's plaint was the plaint of many a pious Jew in the centuries which immediately preceded the birth of Christ. The sense of universal sin which had possessed the author of Lamentations passed away. In this, as in so many other respects, the Second Isaiah was the child of his time. There were, he recognized and the Psalmists earnestly insist, many in Israel who were honestly serving God, for whom help must soon descend from the skies. But the deliverance for which the Second Isaiah looked failed to appear. Wrong and oppression continued to prevail. Nor was it merely society that was shot through with injustice; the physical universe seemed indifferent to man, or even hostile. The whole cosmos appeared to be out of joint. Hebrew optimism was sorely tried. In the Book of Ecclesiastes it turns to utter pessimism.

Yet faith would not down. The Psalmists passionately assert that exact justice eventually overtakes both the righteous and the wicked in this world; although

the very vehemence of the language which they employ, no less than their frequent complaints regarding the troubles of the good, only prove how poignantly they felt the difficulty of maintaining their faith. The author of the poem of Job faces the issue squarely. Selecting a righteous man of the olden time as his hero, he makes Job insist, in the teeth of the protests of his friends, that he was wholly righteous, and represents him as demanding of God the reason for his sufferings. But the only answer which God vouchsafes to Job is to spread before him the whole panorama of creation in all its wonder and complexity, until Job is impressed with his own littleness and the folly of criticizing the acts of the Creator.

But questioning could not be thus stilled. An intelligible answer was required; and after long travail one was evolved; suggested more or less, it may be, by the Zoroastrian ideas with which the Hebrews came into contact in the Persian and Greek periods. That answer was this: God was indeed standing aloof from the world at present because of the world's sin. The present universe is under the sway of an enemy of God and man, Satan; hence the prevalence of sin and wrong and suffering in the world. But God would not allow Himself to be balked forever. In His own good time He would overthrow the Kingdom of Satan and bring forth a new heavens and a new earth in which perfect righteousness and perfect happiness should reign for ever.

But what of the righteous who had died or who should die before the Kingdom of God should come?

One receives something of a shock when one examines the Old Testament as to its teaching regarding the life beyond the grave. In only two passages is the doctrine of a resurrection clearly stated, Isaiah xxvi. 19 and Daniel xii. 2f.; the last certainly and the first not improbably a second-century passage. As we saw in the last chapter, the common view of the Old Testament writers is the ordinary Semitic view, that after death the soul descends to a Sheol. It is this gloomy prospect which lends passion to the Psalmists' prayers that God should show them favor before they die:

> How long, O Jehovah? Wilt Thou hide Thyself forever?
> How long shall Thy wrath burn like fire?
> Oh, remember how short my time is,
> For what vanity hast Thou created the children of men!
> What man is he that shall live and not see death,
> That shall deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?
> —Psalm lxxxix. 46ff.[16]

For, as Jehovah is reminded in other Psalms, His power can be manifested only on earth.

> Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead?
> Shall the shades arise and praise Thee?
> Shall Thy loving kindness be declared in the grave,
> Or Thy faithfulness in Abaddon?
> Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark,
> And Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
> —Psalm lxxxviii. 10-12.

In the older religion of Israel, where the national consciousness overshadowed the individual and Jehovah was thought of as primarily the god of the

[16] *Cf.* also Job xvii. 15f.

nation, the neglect of the question as to the future life of the individual was not unnatural. But with the individualizing of religion, the unsatisfactoriness of the idea of Sheol came more and more to be felt. In moments of exaltation some of the later writers in the Old Testament express the hope that not death itself could separate them from God.[17] This lacuna in Hebrew religion was now supplied by the doctrine of a resurrection.

One further characteristic of this revision of the Messianic Hope must be noted: it was always assumed that the establishment of the Kingdom of God would come suddenly. It is hard for us to realize how very recent is the idea of orderly progress. We take for granted that every event is the inevitable resultant of the whole series of events which have led up to it, that history proceeds under the law of causation. The Hebrews had no such idea. Their point of departure was rather the idea of the omnipotence and inflexible justice of God. God could overthrow the Kingdom of Satan at any time; the only thing which held Him back was the necessity of meting out punishment for sin. The result was that hope grew brighter in times of distress. When suffering and persecution were at their keenest, then the thought always presented itself that this was at last the end. The cup of Jehovah's anger must now be full. He must now burst out upon the enemy.

Hence every time of stress produced its *Apocalypse*

[17] *Cf.* Job xix. 25ff.; Psalms xvi. 9ff., xvii. 15, lxxiii. 24ff.

or pseudonymous forecast of the coming deliverance —pseudonymous, not so much because the acknowledgment of authorship would be certainly fatal to the author (whatever the Jews were, they were the stuff of which martyrs are made), but because only a message which professed to emanate from one of the saints of old would be likely to be credited and lend confidence to the faint-hearted. The typical illustration of such an Apocalypse in the Old Testament is the Book of Daniel, called forth in 165 B.C. by the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. The great Christian example is the Book of Revelations,[18] which in all probably was evoked by the persecution of Domitian in 95 A.D. But a whole array of other Apocalypses, professing to emanate from Enoch, Baruch, Isaiah, Moses, the Twelve Patriarchs, and other ancient worthies, have been preserved and may be read in translation in Professor R. H. Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament.*

The pictures of the future struck out by the imaginations of these writers varied greatly in details. The Apocalyptic Hope was never standardized. Some, for instance, looked only for a resurrection of the just; the unjust would be left to languish in Sheol. Others looked for a general resurrection of all the dead for judgment; at which time the just would be admitted to everlasting blessedness, while the wicked would be condemned to everlasting torment in Gehenna. In

[18] *Revelatio* is the Latin for the Greek word *apokalypsis.*

many Apocalypses, e.g., in the Book of Daniel itself, the figure of a Messiah does not occur at all; it is God Himself who shall appear to overthrow Satan and judge mankind. In others the older Messianic Hope is combined with the new expectation of a cosmic revolution. After a reformation effected by a prophet —by Elijah returned to earth, as prophesied in Malachi iv. 5, 6, or by the prophet foretold in Deuteronomy xviii. 15ff.—a scion of the House of David, born in Bethlehem (as stated in Micah v. 2) and bearing the old royal titles of "the Messiah of Jehovah" and "Son of God," was to overthrow the foreign oppressors, gather together the exiles, and rule the world from Jerusalem with perfect wisdom and justice.[19] The words of the prophets would thus be fulfilled. Then, when the Messiah had reigned four hundred or a thousand years, would come the end of the present universe, the general resurrection and judgment, and the new heavens and the new earth. Yet other writers conceived of the Messiah, not as a human figure, but as a supernatural being sent from heaven at the time of the final catastrophe to act as God's agent in judging the world and overthrowing Satan. A peculiar tendency in Jewish thought entered in here. According to the metaphysics of late Judaism, all that ever shall exist was created by God at the beginning and remains stored up in heaven until the time for its appearance on earth shall arrive. The New Jerusalem, for instance, already exists; it has

[19] *Cf.* Isaiah ii. 2-4, ix. 1-7, xi. 1-16, etc.

only to appear.[20] So too the Messiah has lived with God from before the creation of the world. Curiously, this was the conception of the Messiah which was associated with the title "Son of Man"; the reason being that the Jewish interpretors of Daniel vii. 13 identified the "one like unto a son of man" in that passage, who "came with the clouds of heaven," with the Messiah, despite the fact that both the context and the interpretation of the passage given by the writer himself in vii. 22 make it clear that the Son of Man here typifies not an individual but the Jewish nation as a whole.

It would be an error to think of first-century Judaism as everywhere impregnated with apocalyptic ideas. To begin with, Apocalyptic was entirely alien to the thought of Hellenistic Judaism. Hellenistic Judaism, however, does not fall within the purview of the present chapter, inasmuch as the immediate background of Primitive Christianity was exclusively Palestinian.

In Palestine itself it was scorned by the Sadducees, a sect roughly coextensive with the priestly aristocracy which ever since the days of Ezra had constituted the governing class in Jerusalem. The Sadducees were essentially men of the world, interested in the political fortunes of the nation, with a dread of any outbreak of national enthusiasm which might lead to revolt from Rome with its inevitable consequences. They regarded religion mainly as a pillar of the existing

[20]Revelations xxi. 10ff.

social order, including of course in that social order the Temple services by which the majority of them gained their living. Like a large section of the well-to-do class in every age, they were dead to the problems presented by vital religious experience. The Law and the Prophets, the conventional faith and practice of their forefathers, was enough for them; and ought, in their opinion, to be enough for anyone. When the writer thinks of the Sadducees, there always arises before him the memory of an estimable and charitable, and also very rich and aristocratic, old archdeacon whom he once heard preaching (in mid-Victorian open surplice, black scarf, and scarlet hood) to a congregation of English villagers. The burden of his sermon was, "Be good, my dearly beloved brethren, be honest, be kind; but above all, beloved, *avoid enthusiasm!*"

Among the masses, also, there were many to whom the Apocalyptic Hope did not appeal. The practical message of Apocalyptic was to wait patiently for the Lord's intervention. But they were impatient. They felt, as the prosperous Sadducee and Pharisee did not, the weight of the foreign tyranny. The older Messianic dream of a Jewish empire in this present world was more to their liking; and their instinct was to follow any leader who should proclaim a holy war against the Gentile. This party was known as the *Qanna'im* (Greek, *Zelotai*). The Apostle Simon the Less, we are told, belonged to it.

The Apocalyptic Hope, in fact, was peculiarly a tenet of the Pharisees. But Pharisaism best represents the ideas which Primitive Christianity presupposed.

Not that Jesus and his disciples were Pharisees; they belonged to the common people. But they were Palestinian Jews, and in Palestine the Pharisees were looked up to as religious guides and as models of piety. With all their faults they represented the most advanced type of Judaic religion.

They were the outstanding exponents of Hebrew conscience. Among them both the high earnestness and the trivial externalism of Ezraic Judaism were found at their best and worst. The very word Pharisee ("separated") reminds us of the description of the faithful in the Book of Nehemiah:[21] "all they that had separated themselves from the peoples of the land unto the Law of God"; a description which precisely expresses the Pharisaic ideal. With meticulous care they sought to carry out the Law of Moses in all its details. With painstaking scholarship the Pharisaic rabbis extracted a monumental body of casuistry from the Law; and it is fair to remember that the teaching of the rabbis was many-sided. If, on the one hand, they interpreted with wooden literalness the prescription of Deuteronomy vi.8:

> And thou shalt bind [these words which I command thee this day] for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes,

and elaborated minute prescriptions for the making of boxes to contain the passage in question and for the manner in which these were to be worn upon the

[21] x. 28.

forehead or the arm; on the other hand, we must not forget the broad-minded teaching of Hillel:

> What is hateful to thyself, that do not to thy fellow-man; this is the whole Law, the rest is only commentary.

Mingled with much that was absurd, there was much that was sane and strong in the moral teachings of Pharisaism.

They likewise represented Hebrew optimism in its most recent and satisfying form. Whereas the Sadducees adhered to the original Old Testament teaching regarding life after death and denied any release from Sheol, the Pharisees taught the apocalyptic doctrines of a Resurrection and final Judgment; with their corollaries, a just retribution for the wicked and the participation by all righteous persons who have ever lived in a renovated world, in which God's loving purposes should be fulfilled.

Moreover, while the Sadducees were associated with the Temple, the cultus of the past, the Pharisees furnished the leaders of the synagogue, the institution which expressed the living religion of the present. For the Temple services in reality had long been outgrown. Sacrifice was no longer the natural expression of Jewish piety; it was retained only because it was laid down in the Law. Hence when Titus destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D., the strength of Judaism was not affected in any appreciable degree. The synagogue service, on the other hand, with its weekly reading of the Scriptures, its prayers, and its instruction, was the mainstay of Judaism. It was here that the Jew from

his earliest childhood learned to know the Law and the promises of God, and was trained in righteousness. The synagogue, we may remark, was almost unique in the ancient world in its purely spiritual worship and its disuse of images and sacrifices. So strange did it seem to outsiders, that away from Jerusalem the Jews were regarded by Gentiles as having no religion at all. Yet the synagogue was the model after which the worship of the future was to be fashioned.

The Pharisees, it is true, had exceeding imperfections. Their faults are spread on the pages of the Gospels, where they are depicted against the background of our Lord's own purity, a background against which all things human must show dark. They were legally minded rather than morally sensitive, and put the letter of the Law in the place which belongs to the impulses of love and conscience. Their idolatry of tradition blunted their spiritual insight and prevented contact with the Living God. They were deeply stained with the vices of self-sufficiency and spiritual pride. They formed an exclusive class, looking down upon those of their countrymen who failed to observe the full ritual of washings, fastings, and prayers—for the simple reason that poverty and the exigencies of their daily tasks prevented. They referred to them as "the people of the land," the term applied in Nehemiah x. 28 to the heathen neighbors of the Jews. They were often heartless in their dealings with the poor, exacting from them the last farthing of indebtedness. Above all, "they said and did not." "The scribes and Pharisees," said Jesus to his disciples, "sit

on Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you, do and observe. But do not ye after their works."[22]

Yet when all is said, these are the prevailing sins of church people in all ages; and Pharisaism, like the Church of our own time, despite all its faults, kept the torch of religion alight. It is to be remembered to their undying credit that Mary and Joseph and our Lord himself grew up in an atmosphere impregnated with their teachings.

[22]St. Matthew xxiii. 2.

CHAPTER IV

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

The Coming of Jesus—His Authoritative Teaching—And His Miracles—Suggest the Question as to His Person—His Messianic Claim—The Cross—The Resurrection and Its Effects—The First Christian Apologetic and the Doctrine of the Atonement—Resumé of the Primitive Gospel—The Old Roman Symbol a Summary of It—The Doctrine of the Virgin Birth and Its Religious Values—Which Value is Emphasized in the New Testament.

In the first third of the first century of our era, there dwelt in Galilee one who *lived* the life which the highest Hebrew religion *taught*; and by bringing it to the test of life, purified it and brought it to perfection.

Above all, in his own life and experience he revived that earliest and most fundamental characteristic of Hebrew religion which later Judaism had almost lost: the sense of contact with the Living God. To Jesus, God was no remote, unapproachable Being, but his ever-present Father, whom he trusted, obeyed, and whose handiwork he saw everywhere. What Hebrew legend had imagined Enoch as doing, and what Micah had preached as the highest requirement of religion, that Jesus did in actual fact: he "walked with God." The perfection of his communion with his Father and the perfection of his character were two sides of the same thing. His trust in his Father was the mainspring of his goodness, and his sinlessness left his vision of God unclouded; and not his vision of God alone, but also his understanding of man and human relationships. For there is an intimate connection

between a man's conduct and his ethical insight. As a distinguished Unitarian theologian has remarked, the perfect sanity of Jesus' teaching is the supreme attestation to the moral sanity of his life.[1]

It is clear on the face of the Gospels that in Jesus' lifetime his contemporaries thought of him in the first instance as simply a human being. The fact of the Incarnation was late in dawning even on his own followers. Two things first attracted the notice of Jesus' contemporaries to him: his teaching and his miracles. "Never man spake like this one."[2] "They were astonished at his teaching; for he taught as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."[3] The teachings of Jesus have had a remarkable history. We read them in our English Bibles and our best selves respond to them. In this both learned and simple agree. The more we study them, whether in the light of their historical context or in the light of our own deepest and holiest intuitions, the more perfect does their wisdom appear. This has been the testimony of good men in every age. Every deepening and widening of knowledge and vision has only revealed the truth of Jesus' teaching more clearly.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessings to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

[1] A quotation from memory of a lecture delivered some twenty years ago by Professor William Wallace Fenn at Harvard.

[2] St. John vii. 46.

[3] St. Mark i. 22.

For wisdom dwelt with mortal powers,
  Where truth in closest words shall fail,
  When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
  With human hands the creed of creeds
  In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
  Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
  And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

Jesus' original auditors felt the force of his teaching, but they noted something else, namely, that he spoke with authority—"Moses said . . . but I say unto you."[4] Among a people which regarded the age of prophecy as past, such assurance was startling, and indeed shocking, except to those whom Jesus won to himself. In a sense, of course, he did only what every scholar does. For the difference between the scholar and the second-hand retailer of scholarship is just this, that the scholar trusts his own conclusions. When he has examined the evidence, he defers to no man's reaction upon it above his own. Other men's findings on matters which lie within his field he accepts only when he has passed the problems through his own mind and arrived at the same results. In matters of pure scholarship, such self-confidence nowadays excites no remark. We do not call it "assurance" but "intellectual self-respect." But Jesus was concerned with interests more profound and more vital than

[4] *Cf.* St. Matthew v. 21ff., xix. 3ff., etc.

those upon which scholarship, in the ordinary sense of that term, attempts to speak. He was dealing with those deep human problems which defy scientific investigation and in which faith and moral intuition must be our guides. Yet the consensus of right-thinking mankind, the last court of appeal by which ideas may be judged, is that his teaching was in all respects sound. His unstained character and his perfect unselfishness and sympathy left his vision unclouded; or rather, to use the language which he himself has taught us, God revealed to him Himself and His will because his heart was pure. Among those who listened to his words when they were first spoken, there were many who felt them to be, what he himself reverently recognized them as being, a revelation from on high.

"He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with him."[5] The second feature of Jesus' career which impressed his contemporaries was his miracles.

As we review the modern controversies regarding the historicity of Jesus' miracles, one curious fact emerges, namely, that the defense has been guilty almost uniformly of a strange error in strategy: it has allowed its opponents to define the issue. Openly or tacitly, the definition of miracle accepted as the basis of argument has been that of David Hume:

> A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature. . . . Nothing is esteemed a miracle if it happen in the common course of nature.[6]

[5]Acts x. 38.

[6]The definition occurs in Hume's brief *Essay on Miracles,* in his collected essays.

The result of thus electing to fight on the ground chosen by the enemy has been not merely that the defenders of orthodoxy have fought at an enormous disadvantage—once Hume's premises are granted, his conclusions are almost unescapable—but also that the whole teaching of the New Testament regarding miracles has been seriously obscured.

For that was not what Primitive Christianity meant by miracle. The conception of unvarying "laws of nature" was entirely foreign to first-century Jewish thought; the entire orderliness of God's workings was an observation which it remained for modern times to make. The assumption underlying primitive Christian thought was rather that, God being omnipotent, there was no limitation upon what He might do for those who earned His favor. The New Testament conception of miracle can be gathered from such passages as Acts ii. 22:

> Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know;

or St. John ix. 30ff.:

> Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth His will, him he heareth.

In other words, a miracle in the New Testament sense is a marvelous act of God evoked by extraordinary obedience on the part of man. It is an evidence of God's favor; and, since God is a God of righteousness,

an evidence also of the righteousness of him through whose prayer it is achieved. Obviously if miracle be thus defined, the age of miracles can never pass. When, for instance, a man by rigorously obeying the laws of health achieves vigor and length of life, it is a miracle, albeit that it "happens in the common course of nature." The health that he receives is a gift of God elicited by obedience to God's will. Belief in God involves a belief in miracle.

That Jesus wrought miracles in the New Testament sense is both a priori probable and abundantly attested. The revelations which he received and transmitted, the founding of the Church, the saving power which emanated from him and which still emanates from him—these are all palpable miracles, gifts of God earned by Jesus' perfect obedience. But the miracles which first impressed his contemporaries were those referred to in the passage from the Acts which we quoted at the head of the last paragraph but one: his miracles of healing. For after making all possible allowances for an element of legendary growth in the Gospel narratives, it must be regarded as historically certain that Jesus at least healed the sick.

The convincing and authoritative character of Jesus' teaching and the miracles of Jesus raised inevitably in the minds of his contemporaries the question as to his person. It seemed clear that God was with him. Who then was he? Various answers were offered: He was one of the Prophets risen again. The guilty conscience of Herod suggested that he was John the Baptist. To others it occurred that perhaps

he was the herald of the messianic era, Elijah or the prophet promised to Moses.[7] Or, more thrilling yet, might he not be the Messiah himself? It is to be remembered that, according to the commonest conception, the Messiah was to be a human figure, a descendant of David.

Jesus encouraged his disciples to take the last and most exalted view; though at no point is it more difficult to recover the exact thought of Jesus than just here. That he believed himself to be the Messiah may be regarded as certain, although some distinguished scholars have attempted to explain the evidence away. Not merely are the messianic utterances of Jesus in the Gospels too numerous to be deleted without rending the whole fabric of the narrative to pieces; but it is difficult to see how the disciples after the Resurrection could have so unanimously held that Jesus was the Messiah, had not he himself advanced messianic claims; and it is quite impossible to account for his execution as a traitor to Caesar on any other hypothesis. But the precise sense in which he regarded himself as the Messiah it is impossible to define with certainty. It is easier to state the truth regarding his messiahship as we see it today.

We can see that the question, Was or was not Jesus the Messiah for whom the prophets looked, admits of no simple answer. A political ruler and world conqueror such as they for the most part expected, he neither was nor chose to be. It is clear from the

[7] St. Mark vi. 14ff.

Temptation story—a story which obviously must have emanated originally from Jesus himself—that Jesus at the outset of his ministry deliberately refused to aim at political power, which he saw could be achieved only by compromising with the forces of evil in the world. In this sense he most certainly was not the Messiah whom the Prophets foretold. Yet it would be wrong to identify the essence of the Messianic Hope with any or all of the prophetic visions of it. In all the messianic passages of the Old Testament one detects a sense of strain. The writers are struggling to depict a golden age in which the purposes of God for Israel should be fulfilled; but their imaginations are colored in every case by the circumstances of their respective times and by the limitations of their spiritual insight. We realize today that none of them succeeds in picturing a hope which would really satisfy. Neither a national restoration under an ideal king nor a renovated universe would mean perfect happiness, even for the Jew. We can see, now that Jesus has shown us, that only a renovation of human character, the transformation of all mankind into Jesus' likeness, can bring in an age of pure gold. The final solution of any human problem must wait upon that. Such a transformation Jesus rightly recognized that he was initiating. His spirit is still carrying it on. The true Messianic Hope, therefore, he does fulfil.

In some sense, we must believe, this was Jesus' own thought of his messiahship, although doubtless his con-

ceptions were not cast exactly in these modern molds.[8] If so, we can understand the dilemma in which he was placed. He was the true Messiah, and it was important that men should cease to look for any other; yet to assert his messianic claim was to be certain of being misunderstood. This would explain the fact recorded in St. Mark that he discouraged any public proclamation of his messiahship in his own lifetime; and also his refusal to answer Pilate's direct question "Art thou a King" with either yes or no.

But whatever difficulties enshroud Jesus' own messianic views, there can be no question as to those of the disciples. They believed him to be the Christ and looked for the Messianic Age immediately to dawn; and not even Jesus' repeated warnings that suffering and defeat lay immediately ahead could prepare them for the catastrophe. The Crucifixion found them unprepared, and "they all forsook him and fled."[9]

It is easy to blame them. But we should realize that the Crucifixion was to them more than a disappointment; it was a shattering blow to their faith in Jesus. Inasmuch as, according to Jewish orthodox belief, suffering is always the result of sin, it seemed to prove that Jesus must after all have been a sinner; and it

[8]How far Jesus' thought was molded by the apocalyptic imagery of his day has been much discussed in recent years, but with no generally accepted result. The Gospels report sayings of his which are distinctly apocalyptic; but the question always arises as to whether these sayings may not have been in a measure recast in the course of the forty years' oral transmission which intervened between the crucifixion and the first extant Gospel, to make them conform with the apocalyptic ideas of the early church.

[9]St. Mark xiv. 50.

seemed beyond question to prove that he could not have been the Messiah, for it was inconceivable that God should allow His Messiah to suffer defeat.

Then on the third day, first Peter and then others of the disciples saw him again. This experience of theirs is attested by evidence which it is impossible to reject, notably by the evidence of St. Paul,[10] who himself saw Jesus on the road to Damascus. The explanation of these experiences involves a complication of historical, psychological, and ontological questions which very fortunately we may here lay aside. Whether and in what sense these visions were "objective"; or how far they were simply hallucinations occasioned by the love and yearning of the disciples, assisted perchance by the disappearance of the body; how far, even on some such theory, hallucination may have been only the means by which the risen Christ revealed himself—these and a variety of other explanations which have been offered in modern times it is unnecessary for us at this point to discuss. Our present concern is with the faith of the Primitive Church, and that faith is absolutely clear. The disciples firmly believed that they had seen Jesus, and for them the interpretation of this experience lay close at hand in the familiar conception of a resurrection: God had raised Jesus from the dead.

On this conviction the Christian Church was founded. It dispelled the disciples' doubts. All question as to Jesus' perfect goodness was removed by

[10] I Corinthians xv. 1ff.

so signal an evidence of God's favor. Moreover, the resurrection proved that Jesus had not suffered permanent defeat. He would yet accomplish his messianic work. God had taken him to Himself in heaven to await the time appointed.

The whole Apocalyptic Hope now attached itself to the risen Christ. After one last furious assault of the powers of darkness, Jesus would reappear from heaven, the dead would be raised to judgment, and then would begin the eternal Kingdom of God. In accordance with the apocalyptic habit of thought, they expected Jesus to return in triumph immediately. How far Jesus himself had seen the future in this shortened perspective is a question which is bound up with the larger question to which we have already adverted, the question as to how far his thought was colored by apocalyptic conceptions. In the Gospels he is represented as teaching distinctly that the Messianic Age was to come in the course of the generation then living.[11] But here again the question arises as to how far the beliefs of the Primitive Church have colored the record. For the evidence is abundant and conclusive that the first generation of Christians believed in all literalness that the Lord was at hand.[12]

The effect of these beliefs upon the disciples was profound and transforming. It confirmed something

[11] *Cf.* St. Mark ix. 1, xiii. 30ff., and the parallel passages in St. Matthew and St. Luke.

[12] *Cf.* Romans xiii. 11f.; I Corinthians i. 7f., iv. 5, vii. 29ff., xv. 51f., xvi. 22; Philippians i. 6, 10, iii. 20f., iv. 5; I and II Thessalonians *passim;* Hebrews x. 25; St. James v. 8; I Peter iv. 7, etc.

which Jesus himself had effected in them, namely, the sense of the reality and nearness of God. God had visibly intervened in human affairs by sending Jesus, and then by raising him from the dead. The paralyzing sense of the aloofness of God which had rested so heavily upon the Jew for so many generations vanished. They felt themselves in communion with a Living Father.

Jesus also remained a living reality. More even than when he was with them on earth he remained their living Lord. In moments of crisis—to Stephen as he faced martyrdom and to St. Paul as he struggled with his thoughts on his lonely ride to Damascus—he appeared to his followers. At all times, they believed, he was looking down upon them from the right hand of God's throne, noting their trials, their failings, and their successes. They had only to look upward into the sky to find perfect love.

And also assurance of victory. Poverty, pain, the might of Rome, the persecutions of Jewish officialdom, the pressure of Jewish public opinion, all had lost their terrors. Their power was to be quickly past. Christ was soon to bring all things into subjection to God. Life, therefore, appeared to them in a new perspective. Temptation found its antidote in one overwhelming interest, the need of being prepared when Christ should come. For the dominating fact for the Christian believer was that he and all men must soon stand before the judgment seat of God to answer for his deeds. Thus in the Christian did optimism and conscience—the two specific contributions of the Hebrew to civiliza-

tion, just as the ideals of truth and beauty are the two specific contributions of the Greek—become focused to a burning point. He became a new man.

This inner change, this access of moral power, the disciples interpreted, in accordance with the psychology of their day, as an impartation of a portion of God's spiritual substance. As was only to be expected, they experienced at times strange excitement, which found vent in ecstatic utterances—the gift of tongues described by St. Paul in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians. Prophecy also, the sense of possessing a message from God, revived among them. These were welcomed as tangible proofs of the presence of God's Spirit in them, and they remembered that Joel and other prophets had foretold the coming of God's Spirit as one of the blessings of the Messianic Age.[13]

Naturally the believers drew together into a company. As yet all Christians were Jews, and loyal Jews. They continued to frequent the Temple and the synagogues and to comply with all the observances of their inherited religion, only with greater earnestness than ever. But they also met together by themselves as a band possessed by one Holy Spirit, observing in common each week on the day of Jesus' resurrection the supper which he had instituted on his last night on earth. Their common hope and faith begot a common love. They bore one another's burdens and alleviated one another's distresses, for love of the brethren ranked as a primary Christian virtue.[14] They recog-

[13] Acts ii. 16ff.

[14] James i. 27; I John iii. 14, 17; St. Matthew xxv. 31ff.

nized themselves as the church, or "congregation" (Greek, *ekklesia*) of "those that were to be saved"[15] from the universal destruction which was soon to break forth, the saints (i.e., the chosen of God) who were to share together the Kingdom of His Christ forever. It was but natural that they should have an initiatory rite, and that that rite should be a baptism of repentance. For converts were added to them in growing numbers. The new life which was in the Church attracted earnest souls, and the Church grew.

But not without opposition. Jewish orthodoxy opposed it both by force, legal and illegal, and by argument. This is not the place to review the story of the persecutions of the early Christians. We are concerned only with the conflict of ideas, for that conflict influenced in many ways the development of Christian thought.

The first Christian apologetic, inasmuch as it was directed against Jewish objections by men who were themselves Jews, naturally operated with Jewish ideas, employed Jewish modes of argument, and rested on Jewish presuppositions. It resolved itself in the main into a question of interpretation of Scripture. It was almost wholly concerned with proving that Jesus was the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and for that purpose it made use of the accepted exegetical method, i.e., allegorical interpretation. Both Jew and Christian alike agreed that God had foretold the whole career of the Messiah; and also

[15]Acts ii. 47.

that neither His amanuenses, the Prophets, nor their readers could be expected to catch His meaning accurately until it was made plain by the event. Therefore the disciples "searched the Scriptures," looking for prophecies which Jesus had fulfilled; and felt themselves justified in reading into passages meanings alien to their apparent sense. The reader will recall how, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, event after event in Jesus' life is represented as having occurred "that the word of the Lord spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled."

Their apologetic of course no longer appeals to us. We recognize too clearly that by the allegorical method one can make any passage mean anything. Even at the time it can have carried conviction only to those who were on other grounds prepared to be convinced. But out of this search of the Scriptures one important contribution to Christian Faith emerged: the doctrine of the Atonement.

The Resurrection had convinced the disciples that the Crucifixion had destroyed neither their Master nor his work; but the question still remained, Why was the Crucifixion necessary? Why had not Jesus been allowed to fulfil his messianic work without that temporary eclipse? It was true that various passages in the Old Testament, as the disciples now discovered, had foretold the death of the Messiah. Jesus, therefore, had been "delivered" to death "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."[16] But why had God ordained that Christ should die? An answer

[16]Acts ii. 23.

was found when the Christians recognized the Servant of Jehovah, in Isaiah liii, as the Messiah. It would appear that hitherto the Jews had not interpreted this passage messianically. The Jewish conception of the Messiah was that of a triumphant, not of a suffering, figure. The messianic reference in the passage was a Christian discovery. Of course, in the narrow sense it must be admitted that it was not a true discovery. No historian today will admit that the prophet was referring to the crucifixion of Jesus. Yet the superficial error of the disciples contained a profound truth. The problem presented by the sufferings endured by the righteous in Israel and the problem presented by the crucifixion of Jesus were in fact identical—the problem of unmerited suffering; and the solution which applied to the one applied to the other. Jesus had suffered, not for his own sins, but by reason of the sin of others; and doubtless, in some way which we shall not stop to define, and perhaps which they did not very clearly define to themselves, his sufferings earned the release of the believers from the penalty of their sins. That the doctrine of the Atonement took its rise in the pre-Pauline church, and probably as a result of applying Isaiah liii to Jesus, is shown by St. Paul's statement that he "had received" from his teachers "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."[17] According to St. Mark[18] the doctrine of the Atonement was foreshadowed in utterances of Jesus himself.

[17] I Corinthians xv. 3.

[18] x. 45, xiv. 24.

The foregoing sketch of the evolution of Primitive Christianity must be regarded as in a measure conjectural. Any attempt to analyze the earliest form of Christianity must encounter two difficulties: In the first place, nascent Christianity was both fluid and intensely vital; and life defies complete dissection. In the second place, there is a total lack of strictly contemporary materials. No documents have come down to us from the first twenty-five years of the Church's existence. We may surmise that few were composed. The first disciples saw no need to record for posterity the life of their Lord or the beginning of the Church. They looked for no posterity, for they expected an immediate end to this present world. If they wrote letters to one another in that early period, these letters are lost irretrievably. We are compelled, therefore, to construct our picture of the Primitive Church out of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles of St. Paul —all of which were composed at the end of the first generation or in the second generation after the Crucifixion; and all of which, we have grounds to suspect, are colored more or less by the developments of that pregnant period.

Yet we may offer with some assurance the following resumé of the teaching of Primitive Christianity:

1. The first Christians took for granted the scientific conceptions which we considered in Chapter II. They assumed that the earth was flat, that the (seven?) heavens were solid domes, and that God was enthroned at the zenith. They assumed, also, the current anthropology.

2. They adhered to the essentials of their inherited Jewish faith.

(a) They believed in one God, the creator of heaven and earth, and that He is a God of love and righteousness.

How far Jesus had taught them that God was the universal Father, and not merely the God of Israel, is not absolutely clear on the face of the record. Jesus is represented in St. Mark vii. 27 as reminding the Syrophenician woman that his mission was for the Jews only, and in St. Matthew x. 5f. as instructing his disciples to preach to Jews only.[19] Yet intrinsically his religious teaching and ethical requirements were untainted by any spirit of national exclusiveness; they were such as appeal to all humanity. As a matter of fact, as the incident of the Syrophenician woman and the incident of the Roman centurion[20] illustrate, he discovered—apparently with some surprise—that they found lodgment in the hearts of Gentiles even more readily than in the hearts of Jews. We are compelled to believe, therefore, that the universal character of his religion was realized by our Lord himself.

But if so, his followers after his death were slow to grasp his teaching. That Jehovah was primarily the God of Israel and had revealed Himself only to Israel was the earliest and most deeply seated of Hebrew convictions; and it died hard. The first

[19]It may be noted, however, that this instruction is omitted in the parallel passages, St. Mark vi. 7ff.; St. Luke ix. 1ff., x. 1ff.

[20]St. Matthew viii. 5ff.

Christians were eager missionaries, and their mission very quickly extended itself to the Gentiles. But the first Christians assumed the universal obligation of the Jewish Law. They quoted the Master as saying that he did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, that

> Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law until all things be accomplished.—St. Matthew v. 18.

They taught, therefore, that a Christian, even though he be a Gentile, must fulfil all the ritual of Judaism; which amounted to saying that to become a Christian, a Gentile must first of all become a Jew. Thus at the beginning the Christian mission partook of the nature of the Jewish mission to which we referred in the last chapter. It was not until Gentile converts became numerous, as a result especially of the journeys of St. Paul, that—not without earnest searchings of heart and bitter controversy—the Church divested itself of Jewish particularism and ceased to require of its Gentile members the observance of circumcision and the other external ordinances of Judaism; that, in a word, Christianity became a religion for all humanity.

(b) Primitive Christianity inherited from Judaism, also, the Apocalyptic Hope. It looked for a catastrophic end of the present world, to be accompanied by a general resurrection, a universal judgment, and the establishment of an eternal Kingdom of God. In accordance with the tendencies of Jewish Apocalyptic, they expected the end to be sudden and not far off.

3. On the surface, the one distinction between original Christianity and contemporary Judaism was that Christians believed that Jesus was the Messiah; that though he had been rejected by the nation and crucified, he had been raised by God from the dead and was to reappear—as they believed, in the lifetime of the generation then living—to fulfil the Apocalyptic Hope.

But that was a most pregnant distinction, a profoundly transforming innovation, for the following reasons:

(a) It removed the thought of God from the realm of faith to the realm of fact. In the teaching, the miracles, and above all in the resurrection of Jesus, God had visibly intervened in human life. For the Christian, God had become again the "Living God"; and even more than to the Old Testament saints, the God of love; for had He not sent His Son to save, and even to die, for sinful men?

(b) It meant, further, that Jesus was still their Lord. Indeed "the Lord"—"the name that is above every name"[21]—came to be their usual mode of referring to him; so much so that "to own Jesus as Lord" occurs more than once in the New Testament as the definition of a Christian.[22]

It was a true instinct which led them to emphasize the title. After all, as we have already seen and as

[21]Philippians ii. 9.

[22]*Cf.* St. Matthew vii. 21; St. John xiii. 13; Acts ii. 36, x. 36; and particularly Romans x. 9; I Corinthians xii. 3; II Corinthians iv. 5; Philippians ii. 11.

we shall point out more fully later on, the messianic concept was an inadequate, and in some respects a misleading, means of expressing the significance of Jesus. In the sequel it was virtually to be abandoned and another formula substituted.[23] The profoundest interpretation of Christianity is that it is the projection of the character of Jesus into human life, and that projection has been made possible only through the conscious recognition of his lordship by Christians from the first generation onward. The earliest Christians must have cherished memories of him which we should give worlds to recover; but even to those who had walked and talked with him, he was much more than a memory. He was a living, actual person whom they looked soon to see again, and who meantime commanded their entire allegiance.

(c) It removed, also, the Apocalyptic Hope from the realm of dream to the realm of concrete expectancy. The Messiah, the Son of God, had already appeared. Therefore the judgment to come and the transitoriness of the forces and rewards of unrighteousness became the dominant practical convictions of their lives.

(d) As a result of their renewed faith in God, their contact with Jesus, and their anticipation of his early coming again, they experienced a profound change in

[23]The name "Christ," to be sure, was retained owing to the power of tradition, but it was denuded of its original, indeed almost of all, connotation. It is noteworthy that, whereas the Greek-speaking Jews translated the Hebrew word *Messiah* by its Greek equivalent, Latin Christianity took over the Greek word unchanged, as if it were a proper name.

their inner lives, which they could only regard as the coming upon them of the Holy Spirit of God.

(e) Inevitably they drew together into a fellowship, which their Hebrew inheritance[24] led them naturally to term the "Church (Congregation) of God."

(f) Inevitably, also, their enthusiasm led them to go far and wide, warning men to prepare for the wrath to come by repentance, and promising to those that should believe and repent admission to the blessings of the new era.

If now the reader will turn to the translation of the Old Roman Symbol (page xvi) and read it carefully, he will see that it is nothing but a succinct statement of the preaching of the first Apostles. The term Apostles' Creed is, therefore, not entirely a misnomer.

It is not, to be sure, a perfect statement of the primitive gospel; it betrays its second-century origin in several particulars. There can be no question, for instance, that it represents God as the universal Father rather than as the God of Israel. It no longer stresses the imminence of Christ's return or the glories of the coming age. It is strangely silent upon the moving theme of the Atonement. It contains no summary of the ethical revelations of Jesus. We shall have occasion in later chapters to note other second-century characteristics in it. It embodies, also, one idea which, so far as we can see, did not belong to the earliest Christian message, namely, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

[24]See p. 71, note 11.

In any consideration of this passionately discussed doctrine, it is important to distinguish sharply between the historical and the religious issues involved. We must not stop to analyze here the evidence as to the historic fact; it would take us too far afield. From the point of view simply of historical science, the possibility, even the probability, that the Nativity stories in St. Matthew and St. Luke are (independent) birth legends must be taken very seriously. Their combined testimony proves, however, that belief in the Virgin Birth was prevalent at the end of the first century; although the evidence of the Fourth Gospel forbids us to assert that it was universal. But for the Church the Virgin Birth has always been more than an historic fact, it has been a religious conviction; and our concern, as students of the faith which the Old Roman Symbol was intended to conserve, is with its original religious significance.

In the first place, how pregnant with meaning is the whole Christmas story! It may be only legend. But poetry and legend may contain truth far richer than historic fact; and this legend, if legend it be, took shape in the Church's wonderful childhood and reflects her first pure faith and love. How dramatic are the pictures it presents! Herod, the typical potentate of this present evil world, trembles at the prospect of overthrow and employs craft and cruelty to destroy the true King, but in vain. Augustus, the world-ruler, is the unwitting agent who brings the King to the appointed birthplace. The Wise Men, the representatives of the world's learning, the Shepherds,

representing the world's poor, Simeon and Anna, typifying Old Testament religion at its best, Nature, and the angels of God—all fitting unite in the rejoicing. Then there are the central figures: the just Joseph, the gentle maiden, and above all the Christ, stooping to share the depths of human want that he may be the Savior of all mankind. These, and other elements in the tale which it would take pages to catalogue, make it the most thrilling that was ever told. In our philosophic moods we may prefer to stick to demonstrable facts and to meditate upon the place which Jesus has occupied in history and in the life of man. We may prefer to collect instances of the failure of evil to crush the right; to contrast the contemporary attitude toward Augustus and toward Jesus, respectively, with our own; to recall how Jesus in all ages has won the admiration and love of both wise and lowly; to think of Jesus in the light of evolution as the type and goal of humanity, which in turn appears to be the goal toward which first inanimate and then animate Nature through unimaginable eons have been striving; or, in the light of experience, to reverence him as the Savior both of the individual and of society, the wisdom and the transforming power of God incarnate. But such musings only enrich the story familiar to us from our childhood; and each time we return to it, we receive new suggestions which set us musing again.

Our immediate problem, however, is to determine, if we can, the place which the doctrine of the Virgin Birth itself held in the faith of the authors of the

First and Third Gospels; and we may begin by considering the several logical possibilities.

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth, as usually understood, involves three assertions:

(1) that Jesus had a human mother;
(2) that Jesus had God for his father;
(3) that Jesus had no human father.

These assertions are not necessarily interdependent. As a matter of fact, the second has actually been held apart from the first. Many sects in the second century held that Jesus had no human parent, but that he was a divine being who emanated solely from God. Conceivably, too, the first and third might be held without committing oneself on the second. It might be held that Jesus' birth was simply an instance of the physical process known as parthenogenesis, and that (assuming parthenogenesis to be scientifically possible in the case of man) his birth involved no more divine agency than any other natural event. Lastly, so far at least as the present writer can see, the second assertion does not inevitably imply the third. The essence of the second assertion is that God had a special part in bringing Jesus into the world, that his birth was miraculous. Would not this conviction remain to all intents and purposes intact if we were to assume that the Spirit (or power) of God descended upon two human parents instead of one? The fact to be explained, namely, Jesus' extraordinary powers and perfect character—which seem to presume a neutralizing of the weaknesses inherent in his human in-

heritance—would be as well accounted for on the one hypothesis as on the other. The ratio of the divine influence to the human would be infinite in either case.

In the history of Christian belief, the respective values attached to these three assertions have been as follows:

(1) The first assertion has served to support the unvarying conviction of orthodox Christianity that Jesus was genuinely a man, with all the precious implications which that conviction contains.

(2) The second expresses the conviction that the bringing of this man into the world must be regarded as an act of God; it is a grateful recognition that this greatest of all gifts to humanity must be referred to the Giver of All Good Gifts. It ought not to be necessary to point out that it is only the origin of Jesus the man which is involved; the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is not necessarily bound up with the doctrine of the Incarnation. The Ebionites in the early centuries, and Dr. Channing and many other Unitarians in the nineteenth century, accepted Virgin Birth while denying the Incarnation. On the other hand, there are many sincere Christians today who accept the Incarnation while denying the Virgin Birth. Obviously, that which was born of Mary was the man Jesus. That the Word of God was united with this man, and spoke and wrought through him, is a conviction which is logically distinct from our conviction as to the origin of the man.

(3) In those ages which lay under the spell of the ascetic philosophy which taught that the sex life is

inherently unclean, it was felt to be inconceivable that Jesus' mother could have been a wife. Rather, men were inclined to believe, in view of her holy character, she must have been "ever virgin." (The phrase recurs frequently in the later Eastern and in the medieval creeds.) This would seem to be the only religious value which has ever been attached to the third assertion taken by itself.

This aspect of the doctrine no longer appeals to many today. Indeed most of us repudiate indignantly the assumption on which it rests. But the other two religious values are felt by Christians of all schools as keenly as ever. They must be regarded as inseparable from the Christian's faith in Christ. The only question is whether these two convictions are or are not separable from a belief in the *Virgin* Birth in the narrow sense; whether, in particular, it constitutes a sufficient recognition of the divine origin of the human Jesus to hold that God came to the assistance of two human parents instead of one.

(4) But has not the Virgin Birth a fourth value? Does it not raise the Incarnation to the status of an historic fact? This, we fancy, is the chief value of the Virgin Birth in the minds of most of its eager defenders today. It is, however, a spurious value. In the first place, as has been already pointed out, there is no necessary relation between the doctrine of the Incarnation and the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. The one asserts the union of the divine and the human in Jesus, whereas the other has to do solely with the origin of the human Jesus. In the second place, to

rest one's belief in the divine origin of the man Jesus upon the historicity of the Virgin Birth is to build upon a very insecure foundation; for the evidence for the Virgin Birth, when dispassionately analyzed, proves very tenuous. As a matter of fact, we cannot but think that many champions of the historicity of the early chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke are victims of self-deception. They may maintain that their belief in the divine origin of Jesus is based upon the evidence of the Nativity stories, but in reality they defend the Nativity stories because they believe in the divine origin of Jesus. The real basis of their belief in Jesus' divine origin is its felt necessity if the Christian life, as the ages have known it, is to be preserved; and this, after all, presents a more compelling reason for belief than any amount of ancient testimony. The growing recognition of the weakness of the historical attestation to the Virgin Birth will result in spiritual gain if it diverts our attention from the external, historical prop to our faith and forces us to define our faith and its bearings more closely.

When, now, we turn to inquire which of these values were present to the minds of the authors of the First and Third Gospels, the answer cannot be doubtful. In St. Matthew the Virgin Birth explains how Jesus could be the Savior of his people and Immanuel. In St. Luke it explains how Jesus could be called the Son of the Most Highest and be clothed with messianic powers. In other words, both authors are interested really only in the second of the three assertions which the doctrine contains. They display no concern

to insist that Jesus had a human mother. Apparently no one at that time questioned it. Nor does it appear that either writer felt that it was inherently necessary or appropriate that Jesus' mother should be a virgin. There is no hint in either of the type of ascetic tendency which this would imply. Their emphasis is exclusively upon the Virgin Birth as a miracle, i.e., upon the divine parentage of Jesus.

Whether this was the only, or even the dominant, importance of the doctrine in the minds of the authors of the Old Roman Symbol is, of course, another question—which we shall consider when we come to it.

CHAPTER V

GENTILE CHRISTIANITY: ST. PAUL AND ST. JOHN

Two Apparent Weaknesses of Primitive Christianity: Its Announcement of an Immediate Return of Christ and Its Jewish Presuppositions—The First Weakness Overcome through a Shift in Emphasis from the Future Hope to the Present Inner Transformation Wrought by Christ—As Illustrated in the Teaching of St. Paul—And in the Gospel of St. John—The Second Weakness Overcome through Expressing This New View of Christianity in Hellenistic Terms—*The Religious Philosophy of the Greco-Roman World:* (1) Form and Matter; (2) Matter and Mind; (3) The Relation of God to Creation and to Man; (4) Matter the Source of Evil; (5) The Transcendence of God; (6) Salvation—The Oriental Roots of This Philosophy—The Mystery Cults—Hellenistic Judaism as Illustrated by Philo—Old Testament Roots of Philonism—*Hellenistic Terminology in the New Testament* as Illustrated by: (1) The Use of the Terms Flesh and Spirit; (2) St. Paul's Doctrine of the Resurrection; (3) St. John's Doctrine of the Logos.

We have just seen that the Old Roman Symbol is clearly an attempt, and on the whole a succcessful attempt, to summarize the original gospel. In order to understand the situation which made such a summary necessary, we must now proceed to trace the evolution of Christian thought between the close of the Apostolic Age and the middle of the second century. In part this evolution was the result of deepening insight into the nature of Christianity; in part it was the result of contact with Gentile thought.

In 50 A.D. a writer in the *World's Work* or the

Atlantic Monthly—had these magazines been in existence in those days, and had the editor deemed Christianity a movement of sufficient importance to merit an article—would doubtless have predicted for the Church no long life. He would have pointed out that Christianity contained two fatal weaknesses: In the first place, it rested upon the expectation of a return of Jesus during the generation which was already drawing to its end. Hence, when that preposterous expectation was finally falsified—i.e., within a decade or two at most—Christianity was bound to disappear. Secondly, it was a Jewish sect. Its doctrines were based upon Jewish presuppositions. Their acceptance, even their comprehension, by the world at large was therefore unthinkable; while within the pale of Judaism the growth of Christianity was evidently at a standstill. The movement, therefore, could safely be regarded as one of negligible importance.

Such, indeed, was doubtless the prognosis of most outside observers who gave any attention at all to Christianity in the fifth decade of the century. How strikingly it was falsified we all know. Christianity survived its great disappointment, and not only survived but spread. Moreover, it spread chiefly on Gentile soil; first, naturally, among the Gentile adherents of Judaism, to whom the ideas in which the Christian Faith expressed itself were already familiar, but eventually also among Gentiles entirely outside the Jewish pale. By the end of the century, probably the majority of Christians were of Gentile birth. Our task in the present chapter is to see how this came to pass;

and, specifically, how the two weaknesses of Christianity which were so evident on its surface were overcome.

The fact is that its real strength lay beneath its surface. Had Christianity been a system of doctrine simply, had its essence lain in its formal teachings, it could not possibly have survived. But it was more than a set of tenets, more even than a hope. It was a new life fraught with *present* spiritual goods—a fellowship with God such as man had never experienced before and an unheard-of moral strength. "A conduct that ancient moralists dared not ask, the character of Jesus suggested and the love of Jesus made actual."[1] It was also a human fellowship, a body knit together by a brotherly love which was proving stronger even than the ties of kin.

Accordingly, within the first generation itself, while the expectation of an immediate Second Advent was still vivid, a shift in emphasis from the future to the present blessings of the believer is discernible in Christian preaching. We can trace it clearly in St. Paul.

The point of departure of St. Paul's religious thinking was the looked-for return of Christ to judgment, which he fully expected himself to live to see. His original problem was that of ensuring "justification," i.e., a sentence of acceptance at the Judgment. His difficulty lay in the fact that he found by experience that the traditional solution of that problem

[1]T. R. Glover, *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (London, 1909), p. 165.

was impracticable. The traditional Jewish teaching was that justification could be assured by obeying God's Law; but St. Paul's moral sense, quickened as it had been by Jesus, realized that something more than the conventional morality of the Pharisee would be demanded by the Judge. But, St. Paul found, God in His mercy had provided another ground of justification, viz., faith in Jesus.

The doctrine of Justification by Faith is at first sight a strange conception; superficially, it is an immoral conception—that a man's deeds will be condoned at the Last Day because of an opinion. It becomes intelligible, however, when we consider the religious experience of its originator. St. Paul's conversion was the result of his vision on the road to Damascus. That vision had convinced him of the reality of Jesus' resurrection, and consequently of the truth of the Christian Hope. But it had done something more. The fact that Jesus should condescend to reveal himself to one who was persecuting him begat in St. Paul a constraining love. Henceforth his fellowship with Christ in heaven became the dominant force in his life. God, also, ceased to be for him merely the Lawgiver; for God, he now believed, had sent His Son into the world and given him up to death for sinners, of whom St. Paul regarded himself as the chief. The Law, therefore, ceased to be an external demand against which all his inclinations rebelled. His love for God and his communion with Christ the Sinless supplied a compelling motive for obedience. His inmost self was changed. He found himself, by

no conscious act of his own but through a divinely wrought miracle, a "new creature."[2] His whole outlook on life had been altered. Optimism, courage, an immense energy, a deep inner peace possessed him. This, and not the mere acceptance of an opinion, was what St. Paul meant by faith.

It solved the problem of justification; for it was incredible that God who had done so much for him should cast into outer darkness one whom He had thus transformed. But acquittal at the Judgment was the least of faith's rewards. It was in itself, here and now, the greatest of all goods. In St. Paul's later writings, the thought of the Second Advent ceases to occupy the foreground, and his theme comes to be the blessedness of union with Christ, now as well as throughout eternity—"the riches of the glory of this secret, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."[3]

In the Gospel of St. John[4] the change of emphasis is complete. In the Fourth Gospel the work of

[2]II Corinthians v. 17; Galatians vi. 15.

[3]Colossians i. 27.

[4]Whatever view we take of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, its essential character is clear. Its theme is less Jesus as his companions knew him during his earthly lifetime than what Jesus meant to the author and his contemporaries about 100 A.D. Anyone who is acquainted with ancient literary practices will have no difficulty in recognizing often in the words attributed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, not verbal reports of things which Jesus actually said, but compositions of the author expressing truths which the author had learned through spiritual contact with Jesus. The identity of style and idea in the speeches of Jesus and in the portions of the Gospel in which the author confessedly speaks in his own person, and the way in which the one class of passages often runs into the other (as in iii. 1-21), make this view of the speeches almost certain.

Christ is represented distinctly as a thing of the present at least as much as of the future. He is *now* the "Well of Life,"[5] the "Bread of Life,"[6] the "Way, the Truth, and the Life,"[7] the "Vine" which gives life to the branches.[8] The Judgment is essentially a present fact:

> Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me *hath* eternal life, and cometh not into judgment but is passed out of death into life—St. John v. 24.

The Resurrection, also, is a present fact:

> I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall live; and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die.—St. John xi. 25f.

For physical death, the resurrection at the Last Day, and the final judgment, are to be viewed as mere incidents in the life of the believer. The fundamental issue of life or death is already settled.

That this was not a mere change of front adopted in order to evade the consequences of the failure of the Second Advent to occur is shown by the fact that the change begins in St. Paul, while Jesus' reappearance before the end of the generation was still confidently expected. As a matter of fact, the transforming power of Jesus, which was experienced from the very first, demanded fuller recognition than the first manner of presenting the Gospel afforded. A restatement of

[5] St. John iv. 14.
[6] St. John vi. 35.
[7] St. John xiv. 6.
[8] St. John xv. 1ff.

the Gospel was called for by the facts of the Christian life; and also a new formula for the person of Jesus. For Jesus was coming increasingly to mean more to his followers than could be expressed in purely messianic terms. He was more than the Messiah who was to come; he was a present Savior, "the power of God and the wisdom of God."[9] The realization was growing that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."[10] In a word, the Church was being driven to realize that Jesus was God incarnate.

For the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ is an integral and necessary part of the Christian Faith, its copestone. One who finds in the teaching of Jesus ultimate truth upon the problems of human living, and in fellowship with Jesus the power to realize his highest self, can logically come to only one conclusion, namely, that in the last analysis Jesus is God Himself manifest in human form.

But the copestone of a structure is always the last to be laid, and the Incarnation as a conception was slow to define itself in Christian consciousness. St. Paul, for instance, avoids referring to Christ as God.[11]

[9]I Corinthians i. 24.

[10]II Corinthians v. 19.

[11]Romans ix. 5 is the only apparent exception; but the punctuation of the passage, upon which all depends, is highly uncertain (see the margin of the English Revised Version and Sanday and Headlam's exhaustive note in the volume on *Romans* in the *International Critical Commentary,* pp. 233ff.). If the present writer may presume, in all diffidence, to state his opinion for what it is worth, he believes that there should be a period after "all," and that the conclusion of the verse is a doxology such as is frequent in St. Paul's writings: "God be blessed forever." In that case (or if a period be placed after the

Indeed, he constantly distinguishes Christ from God; as for instance in the familiar benediction:

> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of *God,* and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
> —II Corinthians xiii. 13.

Sometimes he makes the distinction quite sharp.[12] The fact is that St. Paul's Jewish training, with its emphasis upon the unity and transcendence of God, made for him the conception of the Deity of Christ very difficult. Yet the logic of experience forces from him the expressions which we have quoted, and others equally emphatic.[13] It remained, however, for Hellenistic thought to express the idea of the Incarnation in formal terms.

For the fact that Christianity is not a philosophy but a life and an experience means that it can be expressed in terms of different philosophies; and the need of, so to speak, translating it into Greek soon became very great. It was, indeed, inevitable, if Christianity was to make headway in the Greco-Roman world, and it came very naturally to pass; for Gentiles could hardly help describing the new life which had come to them in terms of their own conceptions. The very

word "flesh," which is also possible), the ascription of deity to Christ disappears. Titus ii. 13 is both ambiguous (see the Revised Version and margin) and doubtfully Pauline.

[12]Compare, for instance, Romans vi. 10; I Corinthians iii. 23, viii. 6; Ephesians iv. 4-6, and especially I Corinthians xv. 23-28. In I Corinthians ii. 10f. St. Paul implies a similar distinction between the Spirit and God.

[13]E.g., I Corinthians i. 30; II Corinthians iv. 4ff.; Colossians i. 14ff., ii. 9.

word "Christian" illustrated how incomprehensible to a Gentile was the gospel in its original form. The name Christian is an obvious misnomer. Strictly speaking, it means "one who believes in a Messiah"; but all Jews looked for a Messiah. The origin of the name is, however, not hard to guess. It was doubtless first applied by Gentile outsiders; for we are told that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch,"[14] i.e., in the first Gentile city of importance in which the gospel was preached. Now the message of the first Christian preachers was that "Jesus is the Christ." To Gentiles the conception of a Christ was wholly unfamiliar and would have to be explained. Outsiders doubtless never got beyond the first lesson, and regarded the announcement of an immediate coming of a Christ as the characteristic thing in Christianity.

It will be necesary for us at this point to turn aside and briefly study the religious conceptions of the Greco-Roman world of the first century. The Gentile world in the first centuries of the Christian era was busily engaged in experimenting with religions in order to find one which would satisfy it. The inherited mythology of Greece and the ritual of Rome had ceased to meet men's needs; but Egyptian Isis-worship, Persian Mithraism, Babylonian star-worship, various Asiatic cults of Mother Earth, as well as Judaism, and the Dionysus worship and Eleusinian Mysteries native to Greece itself, all were finding adherents. But the

[14]Acts xi. 26.

Greco-Roman world demanded of all religions that they accord with certain philosophic dogmas and proffer a certain type of salvation. It is to be remembered that, outside of Palestinian Judaism, the civilization and thought of the whole Mediterranean basin in recent centuries had been becoming increasingly uniform. The world had become Hellenized;[15] and while not all of its civilization was in reality Greek in origin —in the sphere of religion in particular, Oriental influences are unmistakable—[16] yet men liked to think of themselves as Greeks. A Syrian of the first century, for instance, would be as apt to insist that he was a Greek as a modern Japanese to insist that he is "civilized."

The best starting-point for an understanding of Hellenistic religious thought is, on the whole, the metaphysics of Plato.[17]

I hold in my hand a plate. What constitutes it a plate? Evidently its *form* (Greek, *eidos, idea*). Its maker has taken a mass of clay, and by molding it and burning it has imposed upon it the form plate. So it is, Plato holds, with all things. Things are what they

[15]It is usual nowadays to refer to the culture of this Hellenized world as the "Hellenistic culture," to distinguish it from "Hellenic" culture proper, the culture of the original Greeks or Hellenes.

[16]We cannot refrain from calling the reader's attention to the fascinating little book by F. Cumont entitled *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (Chicago, 1911).

[17]In order to be strictly correct, the following account of the metaphysics of Plato would require many qualifications, particularly in view of the fact that Plato's teaching varies in many particulars in his several Dialogues; but it is perhaps sufficiently accurate for our present purpose.

are by reason of the forms in which they participate. Thus even the clay of which the plate is made is clay by reason of its color, its texture, its specific weight, and other characteristics. If we can imagine the matter of which it is composed assuming other characteristics—the characteristics of water or of iron for example—it would then *be* water or iron. Now what is it that determines form? The form plate, clearly, is determined by the use to which the plate is to be put, that which the plate is *good* for. So, in Plato's opinion, all forms are determined by certain goods which they serve; and all goods are determined in the last analysis by the supreme form or *idea* of all, the Idea of the Good. There is thus a world of forms antecedent to the world of things, a hierarchy of forms dominated by the form Good. Concrete things exist by reason of their participation, perfect or imperfect, in their respective forms.

Of course the metaphysics of Plato did not pass unchallenged in the ancient world. In particular, his doctrine that the form or *idea* exists antecedently to, and independently of, the things it molds was attacked by Aristotle and others. The famous scholastic controversy as to whether the "universal" (i.e., the *idea*) is *ante rem, in re,* or *post rem* was only a medieval echo of this discussion. But the distinction between form and matter remained fundamental in Greek thought from Plato onward.

It allied itself naturally with another antinomy, that between matter and mind. From the Greek point of view, the existence of utterly formless matter as the

ultimate stuff of things must be presumed; though the Greeks realized that such matter is essentially unthinkable, for only form can be *thought*. Indeed, in the true sense, matter apart from form is unreal; for anything approaching a real object can only arise through the imposing of form on matter. It is the essential function of mind, on the other hand, to perceive forms —and also to create them; for forms, as we saw, are determined by the ends they serve, and mind alone can perceive ends. Mind is therefore the source of all reality.

Creation, accordingly, involves two steps: the creation of the universe of forms and their imposition upon matter. Both steps involve mind. Hence to account for the world, it would seem to be necessary to posit the existence of one all-embracing Mind, God. How far Plato in his scientific, as opposed to his poetic, moments held to the thought of a personal God as the creator of the world is not perhaps altogether certain; but a little later we find the Stoics taking as the very heart of their metaphysic the idea of a single God or Reason (Greek, *logos*) as the orderer of the universe. Human minds, since they are capable of perceiving, in part at least, the forms and goods of things, must be akin to, indeed fragments of, this Logos. The distinction between the human mind and the divine Mind is solely in degree of knowledge. Insofar as a man attains to real knowledge (*gnosis*), he is "thinking God's thoughts after Him," i.e., he has become divine. The practical value of true knowledge is obvious. It enables us to perceive the true ends for

which to strive and the true roads to them. But *gnosis* has even a higher value. It is in itself the supreme good. For to see clearly the world of forms as it is, in all its order and beauty, is the highest aim to which man can aspire. Not merely must it result in the purification and uplift of the whole active life of man, but it is in itself the highest form of bliss. For in the view of the Greeks the intellectual life is the highest and most characteristic side of man. In this both Plato and Aristotle, for instance, agree.

Mind or spirit is therefore the source of all the good in the world. Conversely, it came later to be thought, matter is the source of all evil. The reader can enter into this notion if he will consider two experiments. Let him try to cut a perfect circle out of a board. No matter how accurate the tools he uses, he will fail. The edges will be jagged; the material will successfully resist the imposition of the form. Next let him try to draw a perfect circle with a pencil. Again he will fail; not because his mind cannot conceive a perfect circle, but because his material hand resists the purpose of his mind. Matter, therefore, is not purely a passive thing; it is actively opposed to the good and to mind. This explanation of evil was extended to cover even moral evil. Pure spirit, since it sees things as they really are, always chooses the good. But it is overborne by evil passions and impulses; and these, it was maintained, have their seat in our material flesh. Nor is that the only evil wrought by our fleshly bodies. The body with its passions so clogs the activity of the spirit as to darken and pervert

even its vision of the good. Matter, in other words, is essentially foul and unclean.

This tracing of human imperfection to the influence of bodily passion, we cannot but think, was due in part to the life of the time. For the common life was steeped in materialism. The mighty architectural remains of the Roman Empire, its aqueducts, its basilicas, its theaters and amphitheaters, its luxurious public baths, testify to the prevailing devotion to pleasure and physical comfort. The lurid picture of moral conditions which we derive from the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and from the Church Fathers, and the impression of widespread degeneracy which Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, and other classical authors of the period leave upon us, have often been discounted by modern historians; but there is good evidence that the age was possessed by a sense of moral sickness, a sickness whose main roots were felt to lie in a thralldom to the things of sense. This, quite as much as the theoretical considerations which we have set forth above, doubtless accounts for the prevailing view of the moral struggle as essentially a struggle against bodily desires.

The conception of matter as evil led to a profound change in the conception of God. Greek thought had always represented God and matter as independent existences; God being ordering mind, and matter a substance distinct from Him, which He reduces to order. Matter, indeed, so Aristotle argued, must be coeternal with God; for it must have been there at the beginning for Him to mold. The incompatability of

the Aristotelian conception of matter with the Catholic dogma of a creation of all things from nothing was to occasion much embarrassment to the Christian Aristotelians of the Middle Ages. But the conception of matter as essentially evil now made the rift between God and matter infinite. It rendered the Stoic conception of God as the immediate soul of the world unthinkable. God being infinitely pure, it was inconceivable that He should ever come into contact with matter, the quintessence of impurity. The creator of the world must, therefore, have been another and less pure being; although, God being by definition the source of all things, the creator must in some way have been derived from Him. The exact mode of his derivation was a fruitful subject of speculation.

The inferiority of the creator was also arrived at another way. God by definition is infinitely perfect. Perfection means absence of limitations. But qualities are limitations, inasmuch as the possession of a quality implies absence of its opposite. God therefore must be devoid of all qualities; incomprehensible and indescribable, for to describe is to qualify. The mind which molded the universe cannot in consequence have been the Highest God. For mind in its very nature is bound by laws of thought; it is, indeed, the very essence of order and hence of limitation. Once again, therefore, the Creative Mind must be a being lower than God, though doubtless the first to have been derived from Him and the one nearest Him in the chain of existences.

The identification of matter with evil affected also

the conception of human salvation. If the imperfections of man are traceable to his material body, it follows that his salvation must consist in the liberation of his spirit from the body's tyranny. This, it was argued, could be accomplished in two ways: by strengthening the spirit through contemplation, and by warring upon and weakening the body and its passions. Hence unvaryingly the religions of the time sought to impart to their adherents instruction as to the nature of God; and held that the highest state of man is ecstasy, when in moments of exaltation he shakes off the restraints of the body and his spirit becomes solely conscious of God. Usually, also, they recommended ascetic practices: fasting (especially abstention from the eating of flesh), abstention from marriage, even bodily castigation and mutilation. But it was increasingly felt that man could not hope to attain to salvation unaided; he required an access of spiritual endowment from on high. Hence an increasing number of religions professed to provide for the impartation of a spiritual Savior from God, usually through some sort of sacrament.

Such were the teachings which at the dawn of the Christian era were dominating Greco-Roman paganism. Men thought of them as teachings of Greek philosophy; and in truth they do display a certain philosophical coherence and may be regarded to some extent as a logical development of the idealism of Plato. Yet if we compare the end of the evolution with the beginning, it is evident that thought had traveled far since Plato wrote his *Republic*. It is a

far cry from Plato's prescription of physical exercise for the purpose of insuring clearness of mind to an ascetic abuse of the body; from the Platonic education in abstract thinking to the practice of a contemplation which aims to transcend thought; from the Platonic beatific vision of the essential forms of things and their harmony with the Idea of the Good, to a mere *feeling* of oneness with the Absolute. It is impossible not to recognize here the influence of Oriental religious ideals.

For the starting-point of higher Oriental paganism lay not, as with Plato, in the distinction between form and material, but in the primeval distinction between dead body and animating soul. God is pure spirit, the highest soul and the source of all souls. He is surrounded and served by a whole hierarchy of spirits ("Sons of the God" in Old Testament phrase)[18]—gods, demigods, angels, archangels, and what not; a vast bureaucracy, each member of which has his own department of the universe to direct. Matter—one thinks at once of a dead body—is essentially inert and foul, the source of all evil and weakness. Moral evil is the outcome of passions having their seat in man's material part. Hence asceticism, often in its most extreme and degrading form, was characteristic of the East. The Indian fakir of today is but the modern representative of an immemorial Oriental tendency. Along with asceticism went its correlative: the notion of salvation as the release of the spirit from its bodily prison and its reunion with God its source, a union

[18]Genesis vi. 2; Job i. 6, xxxviii. 7.

which on its subjective side is realized in contemplation of God, the ultimate Reality. All the higher religions of the East displayed these fundamental features in a greater or less degree. We have seen how nearly Hellenistic philosophy in its later developments approximated to this set of notions. Indeed, one has only to interpret the angels of the one as allegorical of the *ideas* of the other in order to arrive at almost a complete harmony between them.

Allegory was in fact freely employed by the priests of Isis, Mithras, and the various other Eastern cults which became so popular under the Roman Empire, in order to bring their traditional teachings into harmony with Greek thought. Degrees of initiation arose in almost all these cults—lower degrees for the ignorant, in which the mythology and ritual of the cult formed the staple of instruction, and higher degrees, in which were imparted the secret[19] that the mythology and ritual were only symbolic of philosophic truths, and that these latter constituted the real revelation which the cult had received from on high. It may be asked, why did not the intellectual classes content themselves with philosophy in its abstract form? The answer is that their religious instincts demanded something more than a philosophy, something more than views which, as the wranglings of the philosophers proved to them, were after all mere "doubtful speculations." They required a certified revelation, and they demanded also a Savior who should endow them with spiritual

[19]The Greek word for "secret" is *musterion*. Hence these cults are commonly referred to as the mystery religions.

strength; and these things the mystery cults professed to provide.

Judaism itself was not exempt from this process of rationalization. One of the largest colonies of Jews in the world had its home in Alexandria; and Alexandria, the commercial meeting-place of East and West, was likewise at the dawn of the Christian era the home of the type of Orientalized Hellenism we have been studying. Here Judaism received the full impact of Hellenistic civilization. The Alexandrian Jews even forgot their own language, and had to have the Scriptures translated for them into Greek. Naturally they felt a desire to justify their religion to the world around, and perhaps also to themselves, by showing that it was in harmony with the accepted thought. The chief extant monument of this Hellenized form of Judaism is to be found in the works of Philo of Alexandria (*c.* 20 B.C.-*c.* 50 A.D.). It will be worth our while to pay a little attention to Philo; partly as a concrete illustration of Hellenistic thought, and partly also for another reason. Christianity first came into contact with Hellenistic thought in the Jewish synagogues of the Gentile world; and hence it was through the medium of Hellenistic Judaism that it received its first Gentile influences. That this is no surmise is shown by the manifest similarities in expression between Philo and certain portions of the New Testament.

Philo's essential doctrines are thoroughly Hellenistic. God, according to Philo, being infinite in His perfection, is incomprehensible and indescribable. All

that we can really predicate of Him is that He exists. God, moreover, cannot have created the world; for to do so He would have had to come into contact with matter. Creation began with God's creation of His own Reason or *Logos*; or rather—since creation in the strict sense means the imposition of form upon matter, and God's Reason is as immaterial as God Himself—with God's *begetting* of His Reason; which Philo therefore speaks of as God's "first-begotten" or "only-begotten Son." This supreme Logos in turn produced and governs an infinite number of subordinate logoi, one for each class of things. These archetypes mold and sustain the concrete things we perceive. They are represented by Philo, sometimes as *ideas* in the Platonic sense, and sometimes as personal or quasi-personal beings inhabiting the atmosphere between heaven and earth. They are of divers ranks. The upper reaches of the air are inhabited by the angels, or higher logoi,[20] the lower air by logoi grosser in their nature.

Man came into being when the logoi inhabiting the lower regions of the atmosphere became inflamed with sensuous desires and united themselves with matter. The true aim of man is to regain his lost estate by freeing himself from the tyranny of matter and sense and to become pure logos once more. This he can achieve by contemplation and ascetic practices, though only with the assistance of the supreme Logos.

[20] *Cf.* the "prince of the powers of the air" in Ephesians ii. 2, and similar references in Romans viii. 38; Ephesians i. 21, iii. 10, vi. 12; Colossians i. 16, ii. 10, 15.

Because of this function of the supreme Logos, Philo speaks of him as the High Priest who presents man's petitions before God,[21] as the Intercessor,[22] as the Paraclete,[23] as the Fount of Life.[24] Even in this life men can attain to foretastes of their true blessedness and rise to a knowledge of God. With the intellect, to be sure, all that man can grasp is the Logos, whom therefore Philo describes as the Name of God, the Glory of God, the Image of God;[25] but in moments of ecstasy, when the intellect itself is transcended, man can attain unto oneness with God Himself. It is, however, only in the future life that communion with God can become perfected and permanent. Only those who purify themselves in this life from passion[26] can hope to attain unto this bliss.

These doctrines were, of course, Hellenistic commonplaces. The interesting thing is that Philo found them all in the Old Testament. They constituted, according to him, the true Old Testament revelation; indeed, Greek philosophy had copied all that was true in it from the Old Testament. Philo's writings, therefore, are mostly cast in the forms of commentaries

[21] *Cf.* Hebrews *passim.*

[22] *Cf.* Hebrews vii. 25.

[23] *Cf.* St. John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7. The word is translated "Comforter" in our version, but it properly means "one who is summoned, or comes, to assist another." In origin it was a legal term, denoting one who lends his support to a litigant in a court of law at the latter's request, or what the Romans called an *advocatus.*

[24] *Cf.* St. John *passim.*

[25] *Cf.* I Corinthians xi. 7; II Corinthians iv. 4; Hebrews i. 3; St. John i. 18, v. 37, vi. 46, xiv. 9.

[26] *I.e.,* "purify themselves as God is pure" (I John iii. 3).

upon the Books of Moses. Much of his exegesis is, of course, in the highest degree forced; as when, for instance, he explains the Angel of Jehovah who led the Israelites in the pillar of cloud and who appeared to the Patriarchs, Melchizedek,[27] Aaron, the rock from which Moses drew forth water,[28] and the manna with which the Israelites were fed,[29] all as figurative expressions for the Logos. In the first chapter of Genesis, the formless void is matter; and when it is written,

> And God said, Let there be light,

the meaning is that God sent forth His Logos or Word (*logos* in Greek means indifferently "reason" and "word"), and the Logos created the light. Again, the angels of later Judaism, and the demigods of Greek mythology as well, were, according to Philo, but popular expressions for the subordinate logoi.

As a matter of fact, there was this in common between the angels of later Judaism and the logoi of Philo, that both conceptions were outcomes of an extreme emphasis upon the transcendence of God. Both the angels and the logoi provided a chain of intermediaries between God and earth. But later Judaism conceived of yet another type of intermediary which was even more akin to the Philonic Logos. In the younger portions of the Old Testament and in the post-canoni-

[27] *Cf.* Hebrews vii.
[28] *Cf.* I Corinthians x. 1-5.
[29] *Ibid.*

cal Jewish literature, we find the Name of God, the Glory of God, the Spirit of God, and especially the Word of God and the Wisdom of God, spoken of as quasi-personal beings sent forth from God to do His work on earth. To quote a few typical passages:

For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven,
And returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, . . .
So shall my *word* be that goeth forth out of my mouth;
It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.
—Isaiah lv. 10f.

Is not my *word* like fire, saith Jehovah;
And like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?
—Jeremiah xxiii. 29.

By the *word* of Jehovah were the heavens made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
—Psalm xxxiii. 6.

He sendeth His *word* and healeth them,
And delivereth them from their destructions.
—Psalm cvii. 20.

He sendeth out His commandment upon earth
His *word* runneth very swiftly.
—Psalm cxlvii. 15.

With a little pressing, these passages can be interpreted as representing the Word of God as a being distinct from God, who is sent forth to accomplish His will on earth.

In the Book of Proverbs, especially in chapter viii (a chapter which the reader should study entire), the

Wisdom of God is similarly spoken of as a quasi-personal being, who reveals the way of life to men, and who under Jehovah was the creator of the world:

Doth not wisdom cry,
And understanding put forth her voice?
On the top of the high places by the way,
Where the paths meet, she standeth;
Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud:
Unto you, O men, do I call,
And my voice is to the sons of men.

—Proverbs viii. 1-4.

Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
I was set up from everlasting,
Before the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills, was I brought forth;
While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields,
Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.
When He established the heavens, I was there;
When He set a circle upon the face of the deep,
When He made firm the skies above,
When the fountains of the deep became strong,
When he gave to the sea its bound,
That the waters should not transgress His commandment,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth;
Then was I by Him as a master workman,
And I was daily His delight.

—Proverbs viii. 22-30.

Wisdom here is not, of course, exactly the Philonic Logos. It is not a philosophic conception but a poetic personification. Yet it is easy to see how such personifications of the Word of God or the Wisdom of God could readily be reduced by prosaic minds to entities, and in post-canonical Jewish literature they were more and more so reduced. Philo's Logos—we may again remind the reader that the word means both "Word" and "Reason" (or "Wisdom")—had therefore Jewish as well as Greek prototypes.

The verbal correspondences between Philo and the New Testament are too numerous and too marked to be entirely accidental. It is hardly likely, to be sure, that the New Testament writers had read Philo's ponderous tomes. Moreover, at bottom Philo and the New Testament were worlds apart. But there is good reason to believe that Philo did not stand alone, that he represents a type of thought which was prevalent in Greek-speaking Judaism. The "wisdom" (i.e. the philosophy) which St. Paul's hearers wished to hear from him and with which he refused to have anything to do,[30] as well as the false teachings against which such portions of the New Testament as the Epistle to the Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles were directed, were almost certainly of a piece with Philo's speculations. The desire to reconcile the teachings of the Bible with current Greek thought, "religion with science," so to speak, must have been widespread in extra-Palestinian Judaism; not merely at Alexandria, but all over the world. St. Paul and

[30] I Corinthians i. and ii.

St. John, and other New Testament writers, show that the same urge was felt in Christianity. But there is one vital difference between them and Philo. Philo accepted the Hellenistic religious philosophy as final truth, and read it into the Bible. With St. Paul and the other New Testament writers, Christian experience came first. They employed the conceptions of Hellenistic philosophy only to make their message intelligible to their Hellenistic readers.

There was, in fact, much in Christian experience which lent itself to expression in Hellenistic terms. Thus in his references to the moral struggle, St. Paul fell easily into Hellenistic phraseology. In what is perhaps at bottom the most Jewish passage in all St. Paul's writings, the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which he describes the failure of his efforts as a Pharisee to keep the Law of Moses, he constantly makes use of the Hellenistic antinomy between flesh and spirit:

> O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!—Romans vii. 24.

The same antinomy recurs frequently elsewhere, as in his catalogue of sins and virtues in Galatians v. 19ff., the two parts of which are headed "works of the flesh" and "works of the spirit," respectively. Yet if we examine these catalogues minutely, we find that this Hellenistic terminology is unnatural. For the "works of the flesh" are made to include

> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings,—Galatians v. 20f.

sins which can hardly be described as originating in the body; while under the "fruits of the spirit" intellectual gifts are not even mentioned! It is clear that the real contrast in St. Paul's mind is not that between body and spirit, but that between moral good and moral evil. St. Paul is at bottom after all a Jew and a Christian, not a Greek.

Another illustration of the force with which Greek thought appealed to St. Paul is to be found in his doctrine of the Resurrection. Here Jew and Greek were poles apart. To the Jew resurrection meant a return to life; for the Semitic conception of the state of the dead was, as we have seen, that of a state of inanition. To the Greek, on the other hand, a resurrection could mean only a reimprisonment of the spirit in the flesh; and hence to the Greek the Christian gospel of the Resurrection was no gospel at all.

This evidently was one of the earliest stumbling-blocks in the way of the acceptance of Christianity by Gentiles. Thus at Athens St. Paul was respectfully listened to so long as he preached monotheism. Monotheism had come to be a common-place among intellectual Gentiles, and St. Paul could quote a Greek poet in its support. But no sooner had the word "resurrection" escaped St. Paul's lips than he was politely silenced.[31] At Corinth the question apparently became a burning one; for St. Paul found it necessary to devote to the topic a whole chapter of his first letter

[31] Acts xvii. 32.

to that church.[32] His explanation of the Resurrection in that chapter is a compromise. He concedes to the Greek that,

> Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption.
>
> —I Corinthians, xv. 50.

The resurrection body is not, therefore, to be a material body but a body composed of spirit! But—here the Jew and the Christian in St. Paul again speak—the life of the coming age is to be a life in a body none the less. It is not to be a life of pure contemplation, such as the Greek philosophers looked for, but a life of action and social intercourse, a life such as men live now, only purified of sin and made perfect.

Other analogies between Philo and the New Testament can readily be pointed out. For instance, the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture employed by St. Paul and in the Epistle to the Hebrews is quite in Philo's vein. But the main contribution of Hellenistic thought to Christianity was in the sphere of Christology. Hellenistic categories were better fitted than the categories of Jewish Messianism to express the saving power of Jesus.

For the attributes of the risen Jesus and the attributes of the Philonic Logos were strikingly similar. Both were known as the Son of God. The work of both was to impart to man the knowledge of God. Both represented the ideal man, participation in whose nature constitutes salvation. Both supplied an in-

[32] I Corinthians xv.

dwelling spiritual force. It is not surprising, therefore, that St. Paul, brought up as he had been in a Hellenistic atmosphere and spending his life in constant contact with Greeks and Hellenized Jews, should speak and think of Jesus in terms which Philo would have found not unfamiliar; or that ultimately the author of the Fourth Gospel should in so many words describe Jesus as the Logos incarnate.

Yet once again, when we compare the Logos doctrine of St. John i, 1-18 with the Logos doctrine of Philo, a profound difference appears. The metaphysical, the Platonic, element in the doctrine of Philo is entirely lacking in the Fourth Gospel. St. John is not concerned with framing a theory of the nature of things. He is simply using the Logos phraseology to describe what the Church found in Jesus. The keynote of his prologue is to be found in the sentence,

> The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

In identifying Jesus with the Logos, he means simply to declare that in Jesus the truth of God and the creative power of God became manifest in a human personality, and through that personality react upon those who believe. In other words, he is little more than echoing St. Paul's assertion that Jesus is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." The gulf between St. John and Philo is measured by the assertion, "The Word became *flesh*."

CHAPTER VI

GENTILE CHRISTIANITY: THE GNOSTICS AND MARCION

Gnosticism—Its Rise—A Typical Gnostic System: Valentinianism—Why Gnosticism Appealed to Gentile Christians—*A.* It Enabled Them to be Christians without Repudiating the Accepted Philosophy—*B.* It Severed Christianity from Jewish Associations—*C.* It Was More Acceptable than Common Christianity, in that: (1) It Did Not Make God the Creator; (2) It Did Not Represent Christ as a Man of Flesh; (3) Its Ethical Requirements Seemed More Rigorous; (4) It Taught a Higher Conception of Salvation—The Usual Gnostic Estimate of Common Christianity and That of Valentinus—*D.* It Presented a Gospel Such As the Gentile World Was Seeking—*E.* It Presented a Church of the Usual Gentile Pattern—Gnosticism a Religious Not a Scientific Movement—Its Defects as a Religion—*Marcion*—His Teaching—Despite His Apparent Conservatism He Also Was a Hellenist.

In St. Paul, St. John, and the New Testament writers generally, Christian experience takes first place. Hellenism only supplies them a vocabulary wherewith to describe Christian experience in terms intelligible to their Gentile readers; and frequently the Hellenistic terminology has to be denuded of its natural connotation in order to express the writer's thought.

But as the Church entered the second century of the Christian era, a very different type of Hellenized Christianity began to make its appearance. The virtues and graces which the Christian Faith produced in its adherents began to attract the notice of the

Gentile religious world; and many philosophers entered the Church believing that Jesus was the Savior of whom they were in search. Of the genuineness of their conversion for the most part there can be no doubt. Some of them sealed their faith with the blood of martyrdom, and most of them were distinguished for their strictness of life. But they insisted upon carrying with them into the Church their philosophic conceptions and upon interpreting Christianity in terms of their philosophic presuppositions. In a word, they sought to do for Christianity what Philo had conceived that he was doing for Judaism, namely, to show that Christianity was in complete accord with the best thought of the age; and in this interest they were prepared to sacrifice everything in Christianity which did not commend itself to Gentile ideas. The result was the Gnostic movement.

In order that the reader may have some concrete notion of Gnosticism, it may be well at this point to insert a sketch of that Gnostic system which exercised the greatest influence at Rome in the century which saw the adoption there of the Old Roman Symbol, viz., Valentinianism. The reader will understand, of course, that the Valentinian was far from being the only Gnostic system. Many similar systems were propounded earlier and later than the time of Valentinus.

After a career as a teacher in Alexandria, Valentinus came to Rome about 140 A.D. and taught there for some twenty years. About 161 A.D. he was expelled from the Roman church and retired to Cyprus, where he died soon after. He left behind him, in

Italy as well as in the East, a large body of disciples. Unfortunately, the Church Fathers, who are our main sources of information regarding Valentinianism and the other Gnostic schools, do not tell us about Valentinus all that we should like to know. In particular, they do not always keep distinct the doctrines of Valentinus himself and the several variations upon them evolved by his later followers. The ensuing account is therefore as to minutiae not altogether certain; but it is sufficiently reliable for our purpose.

In the beginning, Valentinus taught, was the eternal Deep. From Him descended by a succession of marriages a number of divine Powers or *eons,* male and female. Thus the Deep, the Primal Father, united with His own Thought (a female eon otherwise known as Silence) to bring forth Comprehension (otherwise, the Only-begotten or the Father) and his consort Truth. These four, the Deep, Thought, Comprehension, and Truth constitute the Tetrad. Comprehension and Truth gave birth to the pair, Word and Life; and these in turn to another pair, Man and Church. These pairs together with the first constitute the Octad. From Word and Life were born five, and from Man and Church six, additional pairs. Thus there were originally thirty eons in all, which together form the Fulness, the upper or divine world.

Our earthly world originated in this fashion: Each pair of eons is inferior to that from which it is derived, and originally only Comprehension beheld the Deep. All the other eons, however, yearned to share his knowledge. Finally, in the female member of the

lowest pair, (Practical) Intelligence, this yearning became ungovernable. Despising her own spouse, Will, she tried to force her way upward in order to unite herself with the Deep. This introduced disorder into the Fulness; and she was cast into the Void beneath.[1] There she became pregnant through memory of the Fulness and gave birth to Christ, the architypal man. Christ, by reason of the imperfections of his mother, was born with a shadow. He succeeded in freeing himself from it, however, and hastened upward into the Fulness. Intelligence, left behind with the shadow and deprived of spiritual essence by the departure of Christ, gave birth to the Creator (otherwise known as the Almighty) and a consort. These last, representing the psychic and the material principles respectively, produced and still control the world in which we live. Valentinus, it should be observed, drew a sharp distinction between *psyche* or "soul" and *pneuma* or "spirit." The former, according to Valentinus, is the source of ordinary intelligence in man here below; it belongs wholly to this lower world. Spirit, on the other hand, is divine in its origin and nature, and alone is capable of *gnosis,* or real comprehension.

Here our knowledge of Valentinus' own system breaks off. His account of the redemption of man-

[1]To reiterate, and incidentally to satisfy readers who may desire to check the translations given above of the names of the δυναμεῖς or αἰῶνες: the ὀγδοὰς consists of the pairs Βύθος and Ἔννοια (or Σιγή), Νοῦς and Ἀλήθεια, Λόγος and Ζωή, Ἄνθρωπος and Ἐκκλησία. These, with eleven other pairs, the lowest of which is composed of Σοφία and Θέλετος, constitute the πλήρωμα as opposed to the κένωμα. The Greek name for Limit (*vide infra*) is Ὅρος.

kind is lost. For the conclusion of the drama we have to turn to the more developed systems of the later Valentinians. According to Valentinus' pupil, Ptolemaeus, Intelligence was not cast out of the Fulness after her sin, but was saved by Limit, a son of Comprehension brought forth to serve as the guardian of order. In this revised form the story of creation and redemption then runs as follows:

Limit severs from Intelligence her lower nature, and this alone sinks into the Void, to become a second, inferior intelligence, Achamoth. At the same time Comprehension produces a new pair of eons, Christ and the Holy Spirit, who reveal to the lower eons their relation to Comprehension and the Deep and thus restore harmony into the Fulness. The eons thereupon break forth into praise of Comprehension and the Deep, and in gratitude all join in producing Jesus the Savior. Inasmuch as each eon bestows upon the Savior his own peculiar power, the Savior summarizes all the powers of the Fulness.

Meanwhile, Achamoth in the Void is yearning for the Fulness. The Savior is sent as the Paraclete to her assistance. He takes from her "passions"—fear, pain, need, perplexity. These give rise to matter. Her yearning, the best element in her, alone is left and becomes the psychic principle. The angels who accompany the Savior add to her a measure of spirit and spiritual knowledge; but despite this she is barred by Limit from the Fulness and takes her seat in the Middle Region between the Fulness and the (as yet uncreated) earth. There she gives birth to the

Creator, who later reveals himself to the Jews as Jehovah. Jehovah creates the seven heavens and the earth, with their respective rulers the angels and Satan, out of matter and soul. He also creates earthly man by framing his body out of matter and breathing into it soul.

Jehovah, being destitute of spirit, is ignorant of his mother (whose unwitting instrument in creation he nevertheless has been) and thinks of himself as the highest God. Satan, however, knows Achamoth, and insofar is wiser than Jehovah. Satan endeavors to impart this knowledge to man by inducing him to eat of the Tree of Knowledge contrary to Jehovah's command. Jehovah thereupon drives man out of Paradise into the world of matter; and man would have fallen wholly under the tyranny of matter had not Achamoth secretly endowed some men with a portion of spirit. Then Jehovah relents but displays partiality. Leaving the rest of mankind to perish, he elects the Jews as his chosen people. He gives them a Law, but it reflects his own imperfect character in that it is harsh and irrational. He sends them Prophets, but of necessity, inasmuch as these owe their nature solely to Jehovah, who possesses only soul, they are only psychically endowed. Hence the saying of Christ,

> All that came before me were thieves and robbers.
> —St. John x. 8.

Jehovah also promises the Jews a Messiah, and in process of time sends them Jesus of Nazareth. This

Jesus is pure soul. On the one hand, his body was but a phantom devoid of matter: "he passed through his mother like water through a pipe." On the other hand, Jehovah is incapable of endowing him with spirit. The spiritual Jesus the Savior, however, joins himself to Jesus of Nazareth at his baptism and remains with him until the eve of his crucifixion, in order to instruct man and Jehovah himself regarding the Fulness. He also marries Achamoth, and transports her and the spiritually endowed of mankind into the Fulness. Even for those of mankind who are wholly psychic and devoid of spirit he achieves such salvation as their nature admits of, by delivering their souls from their material bodies and raising them to the side of Jehovah in the Middle Region. Matter, on the other hand, is eventually to be destroyed by fire.

The reader will probably find it hard to believe that a system such as this could ever have been a formidable competitor to the simple and gracious teachings of the Gospels. It seems too like the outpouring of a disordered fancy. Yet if we examine it closely, we can find in it certain motifs which must have appealed strongly to the Gentile mind. These same motifs, we may remark, are discernible in all Gnostic systems.

In the first place, it is clearly an elaborate attempt to unite into a single system three elements: the Old Testament story, the teachings of Primitive Christianity, and current Hellenistic thought; with, to be sure, the latter alone receiving its full value. Gnosticism, therefore, appealed to Gentile Christians, firstly, because it enabled them to be Christians with-

out sacrificing any of their fundamental preconceptions.

It enabled them also, in the second place, to be Christians without sacrificing their Greek pride. Contempt for the barbarian was not the loveliest, but it was one of the most deep-seated, of Greek characteristics, the one which most easily transmitted itself to every outsider who took on the slightest varnish of Greek culture. Now one of the chief reproaches of Christianity in a Gentile's eyes was its Jewish origin; for the Jews were not merely barbarians, but (because they stood aloof from the rest of mankind) the most disliked barbarians in the whole Greco-Roman world. Gnosticism cut the knot which united Christianity with Judaism entirely, by denying that Christianity was in any sense an outcome of Hebrew religion. It represented Christianity as new thing; and Christ as a visitor from the spiritual world, who came wholly without forerunners, so far at least as this lower world is concerned. His coming was an event in the history of the cosmos, not in the history of humanity. This anti-Judaic motif in Gnosticism is well illustrated in the Valentinian version of the Old Testament dispensation.

Thirdly, Gnosticism presented what to Gentile thinking was a higher form of Christianity. Common Christianity in their eyes was in radical conflict with reason, in that it ignored the incompatability of matter and spirit.

Thus in place of a teaching which made God the creator and sustainer of the physical universe, the

Gnostics offered theories of creation which, while providing for the recognition of the High God as the ultimate source of all things, avoided making Him responsible for matter (which in accordance with Greek thought they represented as eternal as well as evil) or for this foul material world. All Gnostic theories represented creation as the work of an impure being, and accounted for the derivation of this being from the High God by some such genealogy as that of Valentinus; although in details and nomenclature the genealogies of the various Gnostic systems varied greatly.

Again, common Christianity represented Christ as having been a man of flesh and blood. This to a Hellenist was inconceivable. The function of Christ being to bring to man an endowment of spirit, Christ himself must have been pure spirit, unclouded intellect. He could not have been hampered by a material nature or perturbed by "passions"—a word which in later Greek philosophy was used in a technical sense to denote both what we should term sensations and what we should term emotions, all of which were regarded as having their seat in the body. Therefore he could not have been born of a mother of flesh, or have felt pain, hunger, or the pangs of death. Either the bodily form in which he appeared to his first followers was a mere phantom devoid of physical substance, or else the man Jesus was only the temporary mouthpiece of the Christ. Those who adopted the latter alternative usually explained that the Christ entered Jesus at his baptism when the dove descended upon him, and left

him before his crucifixion—whence Jesus' cry on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It will be observed that the Valentinians combined both notions. They both made Jesus the Savior a heavenly being and also represented that the earthly Jesus of Nazareth was pure "soul," that "he passed through his mother as water through a pipe."

The ethic, also, of common Christianity appeared to the Hellenist altogether too lax, in that it countenanced marriage, the eating of flesh, and other concessions to bodily "passion." For Hellenism had now become in principle ascetic, and most Hellenistic sects discountenanced these things, at least for those who would attain perfection. There were some Gnostic sects, to be sure (unless they are maligned by their Catholic opponents), who drew from the major premise of asceticism a directly opposite conclusion; arguing that inasmuch as the body was incapable of salvation, it might be allowed to follow its own lusts, provided that the spirit was possessed of true *gnosis*. This, however, we may safely regard as a perversion of the true Gnostic position.

But above all, vulgar Christianity, to Gentile thinking, showed its inferiority by its failure to sense the nature of true human bliss. It remained content with the hope of a renewed life in a body, whereas the true goal of man was release from the body and union of the human spirit with the divine. Most Gnostics argued that the failure of so many Christians to yearn for this goal could be accounted for only on the ground of innate incapacity. The distinction between the

Gnostic and the rest of mankind, including those Christians who rejected Gnosticism, must be one of endowment; the Gnostic alone must possess a spiritual nature. The Gnostic alone, therefore, is capable of salvation; other men, being wholly earthy in their composition, are doomed to share the fate which awaits all things material.

Valentinus, as has been noted, did not wholly agree with this view of common Christianity. He admitted that ordinary Christians must lack a spiritual nature (*pneuma*); otherwise they would become Gnostics. He admitted, also, that ordinary Christian teaching was unphilosophic, in that it veiled truth in story and concrete images. But he recognized that even vulgar Christianity begat a character loftier and purer than that of the world around. It must, therefore, involve some apperception of truth. To this lower type of apperception Valentinus applied the term "faith" (*pistis*). The capacity for faith argued in the ordinary Christian a nature superior to that possessed by those who rejected Christianity altogether. To the endowment which made Christians capable of faith Valentinus, as we have seen, applied the term "soul" (*psyche*). Men possessing souls must be exempt from the destruction which awaits men who are wholly material in their natures; they must be capable of a certain type of salvation, though not of course of the highest.

Lastly, it must ever be remembered, Gnosticism appealed to men as a gospel. In its essence it was a religion, not a philosophy. Its objective was not

knowledge for its own sake, but salvation through knowledge. Moreover, it offered salvation and a Savior such as the Gentile world was accustomed to dream of; only, as contrasted with other Gentile religions, it could point to a Savior who was more than a myth, to one who was an historical person; and it could point to the graces of Christian character as evidence of his power.

Gnosticism, accordingly, always implied a church. It arose within the general Church under the guise of theological scholarship; and each Gnostic sect as it came out, or was cast out, of the Church immediately proceeded to form a church of its own—a church of the familiar Gentile pattern, a mystery cult, with magical sacraments, symbolic ritual, and even higher and lower degrees of initiates.

It is a serious error, therefore, to regard Gnosticism as a scientific movement. The Gnostics were the Modernists of the second century, in the sense that they represented the tendency to harmonize Christianity with the current thought of the time; but that thought was not in any true sense scientific. It was not inspired by scientific curiosity, but by a desire for salvation. It was wholly introspective; it had no interest in the world around. Despite its emphasis upon "knowledge," it despised the intellect; for the *gnosis* to which it aspired was represented as something higher than intellectual perception. Lastly, the Gnostics did not rely upon argument to prove their contentions; quite as much as the Church they relied upon authority. In the beginning, it would seem, they

posed as prophets and attempted to make the Holy Spirit sponsor for their teachings. Then, when the Church appealed to tradition, they represented themselves as the custodians of an esoteric tradition; maintaining that Christ's real teaching had been Gnostic, but that he had instructed the Apostles to reserve it for the spiritual and to impart only vulgar Christianity to the common herd. When the Church countered this claim by appealing to the literary remains of the Apostolic Age, they forged an apostolic literature; with the result that the Church was led finally, toward the close of the second century, to segregate what it regarded as the genuine apostolic literature into an authoritative canon, and to set about defining the limits of the New Testament.

Gnosticism was essentially a religion, and it is as a religion that it must be judged. Yet it was precisely as a religion that Gnosticism was most at fault. Its main defect was narrowness. It despised common human interests and activities. The physical world, our bodies, our emotions (even our best ones), it denounced as evil. The social virtues, honesty and kindness, were little emphasized in its preaching. In fact, it induced a spirit of divisiveness; for while Gnosticism in reality denoted the decay of the Greek intellect, it perpetuated the Greek intellectual pride and represented the Gnostic élite as a race apart from the rest of mankind. At best all that Gnosticism could offer was an individualistic type of salvation, and that of an inhuman sort. It proffered no regeneration for society or for human nature as a whole. It had

nothing to offer the common man or woman, or the little children whom Jesus loved.

In reality the theology of the Gnostics and the theology of Primitive Christianity were diametrically opposed. It may be urged that Gnosticism was no more pessimistic than Christianity in its original, apocalyptic form; that Apocalyptic, no less than Gnosticism, taught that this world is evil and must pass away. But Judaism, even in its apocalyptic form, did not regard the world as necessarily evil. The world was created by God and originally was "very good"; the evil in it is a perversion. The new heavens and the new earth for which Apocalyptic looked were to be what the present ones had been in their original perfection. Jesus' own view of the world was even less pessimistic than that of Apocalyptic. He taught that God, not Satan, rules even this present world: painting its lilies and caring for its sparrows, in His love sending His rain upon just and unjust alike. God's Kingdom is already among men, and those who accept His gracious governance are already in His care. The Gnostics, on the other hand, taught that God was an infinitely remote, unapproachable Being, very different from "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; an object for the straining spirit to grasp after, not a Person to be loved, trusted, and obeyed.

But Gnosticism was not the only form under which Hellenistic religion in the second century sought entry into the Church. About the time that Valentinus made his appearance in Rome from Alexandria, there ap-

peared there also from Sinope on the Black Sea a wealthy shipowner named Marcion, who quickly won popularity in the Church by his liberal contributions to its funds, and then attracted attention by his teaching.

Marcion, unlike Valentinus. professed the greatest respect for Primitive Christianity. Indeed, he went farther than the Church in general as yet had consciously gone in his veneration for the literary monuments of the Primitive Church. The Bible of the Church at large was still the Old Testament. The Gospels and Epistles, to be sure, were read in meetings of Christians, but they were still regarded as human documents; and as a matter of fact other documents, such as the so-called First Epistle of Clement, the Epistle of Barnabas, the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," and similar books, were read in church also. A sharp distinction between "canonical" books and other Christian literature did not gain general recognition until the end of the second century. Marcion anticipated the canonization of the New Testament as a whole by erecting ten[2] epistles of St. Paul and the supposedly Pauline Gospel of St. Luke into a canon, holding that they alone presented the gospel in perfect purity. Marcion, in fact, professed simply to be recalling the Church to the teachings of St. Paul.

Marcion's teaching took as its starting-point the Pauline contrast between justification by works of the Law and justification by faith. This antithesis Marcion exaggerated in a manner which would have stirred St.

[2]He did not regard I and II Timothy or Titus as Pauline.

Paul to instant protest. St. Paul admitted that the Law was "holy and righteous and good," that it was "spiritual."[3] Marcion declared that it was essentially evil and the product of an imperfect deity, viz., Jehovah the god of the Jews. Jehovah was indeed the creator and ruler of the world; but the evil in the world testified to his defects. As a matter of fact, in the Old Testament which Jehovah gave the Jews, he reveals himself as a jealous god, subject to passion and hence frequently repentant, a god delighting in slaughter, the self-confessed author of evil.[4]

In his caprice Jehovah elected to save the Jews only, leaving all the rest of mankind to perish. But all that he could do for the Jews was to give them a Law consisting of harsh and trivial requirements which they could not keep. Consequently, the Most High God, who is wholly spirit and wholly good and loving, took pity on mankind and sent Christ to earth. Christ appeared to men in a phantom body, worked miracles in attestation of his mission, and then proclaimed the true gospel of love and freedom from the Law. "The rulers of this world," being loyal servants of Jehovah, "crucified the Lord of Glory"[5] as a defamer of Jehovah's Law; but inasmuch as his body was not a material one, they were unable to do him any injury. From earth he descended to the abode of the dead to preach the gospel. Cain and other malefactors of

[3]Romans vii. 12, 14.

[4]"I form light and create darkness I make peace, and create evil. I am Jehovah that doeth all these things" (Isaiah xlv. 7).

[5]I Corinthians ii. 8.

Israel, as well as the pagans who had never heard the Law, accepted his message and accompanied him on his return to heaven. But the saints of the Old Testament, having experienced the hollowness of the salvation provided by Jehovah, were suspicious of any gospel. Hence they refused to accept the message of Christ and remain in Hades.

Before leaving the earth Christ appointed Apostles to propagate his teaching; but of these only St. Paul fully understood him. The rest of the Apostles and the majority of Christians down to Marcion's own day succumbed to the influence of legalism and lost sight of, if they had ever fully grasped, the message of Christ.

The later Church Fathers charge Marcion with moral libertinism. According to them Marcion's rejection of the Law was due to the fact that he personally lived in vice and was anxious to discredit the Law by which vice is reproved. This we may safely set aside as a piece of ecclesiastical calumny. Tertullian and other Fathers who were nearer to Marcion in point of time reproach him rather with living a Stoic or a Cynic life. As a matter of fact, he seems to have been a man of strict, indeed of ascetic, habits and to have held before his followers a very stern standard, warning them in particular against sins of the flesh.

The teachings of Marcion found wide acceptance. His moral earnestness, his apparent loyalty to the original gospel, and his emphasis upon character rather than upon intellect appealed to the common Christian. When he was expelled from the Church, a large num-

ber followed him, and the Marcionite Church remained a formidable rival to the Catholic Church for centuries.

Marcion denied that he was a Gnostic. He regarded himself as a conservative Christian. Yet the differences between Marcion and the Gnostics were rather superficial than profound. The intricate "genealogies" which played so prominent a part in Gnostic, as in the later Neoplatonic, systems Marcion dispensed with. Marcion spoke of "faith" where the Gnostics spoke of *gnosis*. He found his gospel in the generally accepted Christian documents; whereas the Gnostics either pretended to have received theirs by an esoteric tradition, or else pointed to documents of more than doubtful authenticity when challenged to produce support in the apostolic teaching for their doctrines. But these were largely differences in detail. All the underlying motifs in Gnosticism were represented in Marcion: its anti-Judaism, its pessimistic view of the present world, its derivation of the present world from an imperfect deity distinct from the true God, its identification of matter with evil and spirit with good, its asceticism, its docetic teaching regarding Christ. Even Marcion's "faith" and the Gnostic's *gnosis* were after all not so far apart; for by faith Marcion meant the communion of the human spirit with the divine. Both held that the body was incapable of salvation. Marcion, no less than the Gnostics, was a Hellenist.

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD ROMAN SYMBOL: ITS SEVERAL ARTICLES

The Purpose of the Old Roman Symbol—Difficulties in the Way of Its Interpretation—The Structure of the Symbol—Examination of Its Several Clauses—Examination of the Additions Contained in the Apostles' Creed.

SUCH was the atmosphere in which the Old Roman Symbol was framed. Christianity was the outgrowth of a life, the most normal life that was ever lived. In the last analysis Christianity is the projection into human life of the character of Jesus. Hellenistic religion, on the other hand, was the outgrowth of a theory; and the theory of human nature and of the world on which it was based reflected an unhealthy age. It was an instinct for sound-mindedness, therefore, which led the common sense of the Church to oppose the complete Hellenization of Christianity; to cling to the apostolic teaching and to erect that teaching into a Standard of Faith. The Old Roman Symbol is simply an attempt to reduce this Standard of Faith to a single, fixed formula.

Its purpose was to safeguard the Church against error; and primarily, it would seem, against Hellenistic error. For there is little or nothing in the Symbol which can be interpreted as directed against Ebionitism (belated Judaism) or against Montanism, the other two main types of second-century heresy. The Ebionites naturally found little foothood in Rome or other parts of the Gentile world, while Montanism

did not become influential in the West until the end of the second century, when the Old Roman Symbol was presumably already in existence. Had the Symbol been framed with Montanism particularly in mind, it would be very strange to find Tertullian so warm an admirer of it; for Tertullian was strongly attracted by Montanism and eventually joined the sect.

But while the Old Roman Symbol is to be regarded as primarily an anti-Hellenistic document, it is not a negative document. It seeks to overcome error by a positive assertion of the apostolic faith. Its essentially positive form was doubtless due also to another consideration: It was intended to serve as a basis for the instruction of these who were about to enter upon the Christian life; necessarily, therefore, it is a statement of the positive convictions upon which the Christian life is based.

The interpretation of the Old Roman Symbol is beset by certain difficulties which we may as well envisage at the outset.

In the first place, its original text is very far from certain. It is something of an assumption, after all, that the Roman creed of the second century was identical in its wording with the Roman creed of the fourth century, as we reconstruct it from Marcellus of Ancyra and Rufinus. The second- and third-century Fathers nowhere quote it entire. In their extant writings, at least, they furnish only more or less inexact references to individual articles. Thus no second-century author attests unmistakably the presence in the Roman creed of the words "only," "our Lord," or "of the

Holy Spirit" in the second section, or of the words "Holy Church" or "remission of sins" in the third. Accordingly, many modern scholars believe that some or all of these are later additions. On the other hand, the second-century evidence may be interpreted as indicating that the first section originally read, "I believe in *one* God, Father, Almighty."

A second difficulty arises out of the very positive character of the Symbol which we have just noted. Each article is a simple assertion. We are left very largely to our historical imaginations to discover the practical bearing of each assertion—a most vital matter, for the practical application of a religious conviction constitutes its very essence. We are compelled, also, to guess at the specific errors against which the several articles are directed. The not very abundant literature of the time affords, however, a modicum of help in so far as it cites a fact or a conviction contained in the Symbol, with a hint either as to its bearing upon the Christian life or as to the use to which it was commonly put in controversy with heretics.

This second difficulty is enhanced by a third, namely, the impossibility of determining the exact date and circumstances of the Symbol. In the case of later symbols whose dates and occasions we know, the bearing of their several assertions can be ascertained by a study of the historical context; but in the case of the Old Roman Symbol we have nothing but the features of the period as a whole to go upon.

For all these reasons the reader must not expect a definitive interpretation of all the articles of the

Symbol. Most assertions regarding the Symbol and its meaning must be cast in the language of probability, not in that of certainty. It is a case in which it is peculiarly necessary that the student should familiarize himself with the evidence in order that he may be able to appraise the degree of probability attaching to any given result of investigation.

The Symbol is clearly tripartite in its structure, a fact which instantly calls to mind the triple formula of Christian baptism, and bears out the theory that the Symbol was originally composed as a baptismal creed. Yet a comparison of the Symbol with the traditional baptismal formula reveals an interesting divergence. The formula prescribed in St. Matthew xxviii. 19 is: "into the name of the *Father,* the *Son,* and *the Holy Spirit*"; whereas the key words of the Symbol are *God, Christ Jesus,* and *Holy Spirit.*[1] The latter collocation of words is familiar to us from the Pauline benediction,

> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirt be with you all.

As we have seen, it reflects the primitive usage,[2] and it was not uncommon in the second century;[3] but its presence in a baptismal symbol seems strange.

[1]It will be noted that the definite article is prefixed to the words "Holy Spirit" in St. Matthew, but not in *R.* It is so prefixed, to be sure, in the existing text of Marcellus' version of *R,* but this text is suspect in other particulars (see p. 14, note 13) and it is outweighed by other evidence.

[2]*Vide supra,* pp. 124f.

[3]E.g., Jude 20f.; Ignatius *Ephesians* ix. 1; *Martyrdom of Polycarp* xiv, xxii. 1; I Clement ii. 1-3, xvi. 2, xlii. 1-4, xlvi. 6, lviii. 2, etc.

Professor McGiffert argues that in Rome in the middle of the second century baptism was actually administered "in the name of God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit." The evidence on which he relies is found in the description of Christian baptism which Justin gives in his *First Apology*. The passage is as follows:

> As many as have been convinced and believe that those things which we teach and say are true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are taught to pray and beseech God with fasting for the remission of their past sins, we also praying and fasting with them. Then we lead them to a place where there is water, and they are reborn with the same manner of rebirth with which we ourselves were reborn; that is, they undergo washing in water in the name of the Father of All and Lord [namely] God[4] and of our Savior Jesus Christ and of [the[5]] Holy Spirit. . . . We have learned from the Apostles the following reasons for this practice. Inasmuch as at our first birth we were begotten without our choice or knowledge . . . and have been under the influence of evil customs and bad bringing up, in order that we may not remain children of compulsion or ignorance but be children by conscious choice, and in order that we may receive remission of the sins which we have already committed, there is pronounced in the water over him who has chosen to be reborn and has repented of his sins the name of the Father of All and Lord, God. (The one who leads him who is to be washed to the washing pronounces over him this name [*sc.* God]

[4] Τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων καὶ δεσπότου θεοῦ. This is a favorite expression of Justin's: *cf.* Appendix Nos. 22 and 27, *First Apology* xxxii. 10, xl. 7, xliv. 2; and similar expressions in *Dialogue against Trypho* xvi. 4, xxxviii. 2, lxxxiii. 4, xcvi. 3, cxxxix. 4, cxlii. 2.

[5] The definite article is omitted as in *R.*

> only; for no one can apply a [proper] name[6] to the ineffable God, but if any one should dare to say that there is such a name he would be incurably mad. This washing is called Enlightenment, for those who learn these things receive enlightenment of mind.) The one who is enlightened is also washed in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of [the[5]] Holy Spirit, who announced beforetime through the prophets all things concerning Jesus.—*First Apology* lxi.

Justin tells us here that baptism was administered in his day in the names of the "Father of All and Lord, God," of "our Savior Jesus Christ" (in the second mention of the formula, "Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate"), and of "Holy Spirit" (or, "Holy Spirit, who announced beforetime through the Prophets all things concerning Jesus"). The variant descriptions of the second and third names show that he is not citing the formula literally, and the first name as Justin gives it seems too clumsy in its form for liturgical use.[7] The natural interpretation of his words is that the formula in use was "in the name of God, of Jesus Christ,[8] and of Holy Spirit."

It will be objected that the Gospel of St. Matthew was well known in Rome at this time, as the frequent quotations from it in the writings of Justin himself

[6]I.e., a name like Zeus or Apollo.

[7]Besides it seems to be a phrase of Justin's own coinage; *cf.* note 4 above.

[8]Or, as the Old Roman Symbol suggests, "Christ Jesus." Justin may have dropped unconsciously into the more common form in paraphrasing the formula.

clearly prove; and that it is incredible that the Roman church should have used a baptismal formula other than that prescribed by Christ Himself. Justin must be paraphrasing the Matthaic formula, doubtless in order to render it more intelligible to his Gentile readers; the formula "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" requires more acquaintance with Christian theology for its comprehension than does the formula "God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit." Yet these considerations are not absolutely conclusive. In the first place, it is questionable whether the formula of baptism is not an interpolation in St. Matthew xxxviii. 19.[9] If it was a part of the original text, it certainly was not considered as mandatory; for it seems to have been customary in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic Ages to baptize in the name of Christ only.[10] We must therefore reckon with the possibility that the Roman church in Justin's day did actually use the baptismal formula which Justin seems to imply. Perhaps it felt that in so doing it was complying with the spirit, if not with the letter, of Christ's command.

However this may be, there is another aspect of the structure of the Symbol of which we can speak with more confidence. If the reader will run through the extracts given in the Appendix of the present volume, he will see that the "preaching regarding Jesus," which undoubtedly was the first form of

[9]The evidence is given and discussed in Hastings, *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II, pp. 379-381.

[10]*Ibid.*

Christian preaching,[11] had long been tending toward a more or less stereotyped set of statements. We may describe the Old Roman Symbol as a combination of the formula *God*, *Christ Jesus*, and *Holy Spirit*, with this "preaching of Jesus."

Further it may be observed that the preaching of Jesus in the Symbol falls into two parts, marked by definite articles in the Greek and by the repetition of the relative pronoun in the Latin,[12] one relating his birth and the other detailing his passion, resurrection, ascension, and second coming. It has recently been suggested by Professor Holl, of the University of Berlin,[13] that each of these parts is related to one of the two titles ascribed to Christ Jesus in the beginning of the section. He illustrates his point by printing the second part of the Symbol in this form:

> And in Christ Jesus,
> His only-begotten *Son*,
> Our *Lord*,
> Who was born of Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin
> Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, etc.

The first title, "His only-begotten Son," together with the first relative clause (which explains it) he thinks is based upon St. Luke i. 35; and the second title, "our Lord," is to be connected with the second relative clause, the two together being suggested by Philippians

[11] Acts viii. 5, 35, xi. 20, etc.

[12] See p. 15.

[13] *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Academie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1919, pp. 2-11.

ii. 6-11. He calls attention to the "wherefore" which is common to the two biblical passages:

> The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; WHEREFORE also the holy thing which is BEGOTTEN shall be called the SON OF GOD.
>
> Have that mind in you, which was also in *Christ Jesus*: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the *cross*. WHEREFORE also God highly *exalted* him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of *God the Father*.[14]

Professor Holl's suggestion is ingenious, and has been hailed by no less an authority than Professor Harnack as a "discovery."[15] To the present writer, however, it seems very unconvincing. That the article on the Virgin Birth is ultimately related to St. Luke i. 35 is altogether likely; but if the framers of the Old Roman Symbol had the passage from Philippians in mind, it is very difficult to account for the striking omission of any reference to the preëxistence of Christ

[14]The translation is that of the American Standard Version. The points of contact between the Philippians passage and the Old Roman Symbol are italicized. Holl emphasizes the common use of the unusual form "Christ Jesus."

[15]*Op. cit.*, p. 112.

in the Symbol; for that idea constitutes the very warp and woof of the Philippians passage. Surely a much less recondite explanation of all the facts is at hand. The titles "Son of God" and "Lord" were so well fixed in usage that their omission in the Symbol would be very strange. The outline of Jesus' life, past present and future, which follows had gradually been becoming stereotyped,[16] and its division into two parts, one relating to the birth of Christ and the other to his passion and what followed it, was according to precedent.[17]

Equally unacceptable, to the present writer at least, is the suggestion of Professor Harnack, offered as a development upon that of Professor Holl,[18] that the original Symbol read as follows and was constructed on the following scheme:

I believe on	1. God	2. Father	3. Almighty
And on	4. Christ Jesus	5. His only Son	6. Our Lord
And on	7. Holy Spirit	8. Holy Church	9. Remission of sins and a resurrection of the flesh.

Harnack suggests that the first vertical line (1, 4, 7) gives the basic divine elements, the second (2, 5, 8) the activity of God in revelation, and the third (3, 6, 9) refers to the power of God and its effects. The

[16]See Appendix, *passim.*

[17]See Appendix, *passim.*

[18]*Op. cit.,* pp. 112-116.

first horizontal line (1, 2, 3) is timeless, the second (4, 5, 6) is historical and future, the third (7, 8, 9) is present and future. In an article following upon that of Professor Harnack,[19] Professor Lietzmann suggests the omission of the reference to the remission of sins in (9), thus making each of the nine parts consist of a single assertion, and offers some (to the present writer very dubious) evidence for the existence of such a form of the Symbol. Granting all that can be said as to the fondness of the second century for artificial and schematic writing (*Kunstprosa*), and granting too the desirability of a schematic arrangement in a formula which was intended to be committed to memory, this interpretation of the Symbol surely is too artificial. As a scheme of Christian truth it lacks obviousness. But the student can hardly afford to neglect this most recent discussion of the Apostles' Creed. The articles are suggestive and will repay perusal.

So much by way of preface. Let us now proceed to examine the Symbol phrase by phrase.

I BELIEVE. In the first instance it is a candidate for baptism who speaks.

IN (ONE) GOD. The word "one" in this connection occurs in all the citations of this article of the Creed or Standard of Faith in Irenaeus and Tertullian.[20] Hence it has been argued that it stood in the second-century text of the Old Roman Symbol. But

[19] *Op. cit.*, pp. 269-274.

[20] See Appendix, Nos. 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 54, 55.

if so it is hard to understand how it came later to be dropped. It is found in none of the later versions of the Old Roman Symbol or its derivatives, although it is almost universally found in the Eastern creeds which led up to or grew out of the Nicene Creed. The late Professor Zahn suggested that the opening words of the Symbol originally ran "I believe in one God Almighty"; and that the word "one" was dropped and the word "Father"[21] added in the third century, in order to prevent the Patripassionists from quoting the Symbol in support of their contention that Christ the Logos and the Father were one and the same. But to change its creed under such circumstances would have meant that the Church was gratuitously providing its opponents with a dangerous piece of evidence. The Patripassionists would have been able to maintain with much force that the change proved that it was the Church which was the innovator, not they. Zahn's theory, therefore, is unacceptable. It is easier to suppose that Irenaeus and Tertullian inserted the word in their paraphrases of the Symbol in order to bring out more clearly the incompatibility between the teaching of the Church and that of the heretics; for the Gnostics and Marcion, not to mention the pagan religions, all were teaching a plurality of divine beings. Irenaeus in some passages inserts the word "one" before "Christ" in the second section,[22] where it almost certainly is not original. Finally, it is to be noted

[21]Which does not occur in Marcellus' version of *R.*

[22]See Appendix, Nos. 34, 36, 39, 41.

that the formula "God (not 'one God'), Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit," which underlies the Symbol as it stands, was consecrated by long usage.

FATHER, ALMIGHTY. The modern reader misses in the Old Roman Symbol the familiar words "creator of heaven and earth." The same lack evidently was felt by Irenaeus and Tertullian, for they usually add some equivalent expression in paraphrasing the Symbol.[23] The expressions they use, however, vary so much in their wording that it is quite clear that they are paraphrastic additions, and that the Symbol itself contained no such clause. As a matter of fact, we do not find the phrase "creator of heaven and earth" in any extant Western creed until we reach the seventh century.[24] The omission is rendered all the more strange by the fact that in the second century the doctrine of the creation of the world by God Himself was regarded by the Catholic Church as especially crucial, inasmuch as the denial of it was a fundamental feature in all forms of Hellenistic heresy. The solution of the difficulty is, undoubtedly, that the word "Father" is used in the Symbol in the sense of "Creator," a sense which often attaches to it in second-century literature. Justin, for instance, describes God as "the Maker of All and the Almighty."[25] "Almighty" is really a mistranslation. In ordinary Eng-

[23] See Appendix, Nos. 36, 37, 39, 40, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 51, 54. It is found, however, in Eastern ancestors of the Nicene Creed from the fourth century onward.

[24] *Vide infra*, pp. 198f.

[25] Ὁ ποιητὴς τῶν ὅλων καὶ παντοκράτωρ (Dialogue xvi. 4 and xxxviii. 2).

lish the word "almighty" suggests the idea of unlimited power. As applied to God, it suggests that there is nothing that God cannot do. But the word used in the original (*pantokrator*) means rather "Master of All" or "Controller of All." The intent of the article "I believe in God, Father, Almighty" is thus to assert that God created and entirely controls the universe, a collocation of ideas which is of constant occurrence in the second-century Fathers.[26]

AND IN CHRIST JESUS. The order of words is unique. In all other versions of the Creed with which we are acquainted, the order is "Jesus Christ." It is tempting to translate, "(I believe) in a Messiah, namely Jesus," and to interpret the article as asserting, in the first place as against paganism, the Messianic Hope, and in the second place as against the Jews, that Jesus is the Messiah. This was the earliest Christian message, and we shall find that the Old Roman Symbol is an extremely conservative document. It is uncertain, however, whether a second-century Christian would thus sense the words. Even in the New Testament itself "Jesus Christ" and "Christ Jesus" seem to be used often simply as a compound proper name.[27] Perhaps it is safer so to understand it here.

[26]Phrases like δημιουργὸς καὶ πατήρ, πατὴρ καὶ κτίστης, θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων, δεσπότης καὶ πατήρ, etc. are common; *cf.* also note 4.

[27]As for instance in Philippians ii. 5ff., quoted above. *Cf.* also the use of the word Christ in the passages cited in the Appendix and J. B. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York, 1889).

HIS ONLY. Both Irenaeus and Tertullian, where they seem to be quoting this article of the Creed, omit the world "only," despite the fact that both authors were particularly interested to contend that Jesus was God's only Son, as against the Gnostics, many of whom were drawing a distinction between the Only-begotten and the Christ.[28] The word seems not to have occurred in the Creed as known to Novatian and Cyprian in the third century.[29] It is possible, therefore, that it was later added to the original text. It represents the only trace of Johannine influence is the whole Symbol; for the word used, *monogenes*, is peculiarly a Johannine word.

SON. The recognition of Jesus as the Son of God has been universal in Christianity from the very beginning. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the title ascribed to him in the Old Roman Symbol. At the same time it is necessary to enquire in what sense it was used in the original Symbol.

The term "Son of God" as applied to Christ has borne various more or less distinguishable senses at different times and in different connections. (1) In Jesus' own mouth, if we are to judge by the first three Gospels, it expressed his relation of peculiar intimacy with God. It is used of him by others (2) as a messianic title, or (3) to express his divine origin in the Virgin Birth. In all three of these senses it applies to the historic Jesus the man. But it is elsewhere applied to (4) the preëxistent, spiritual Christ who be-

[28] *Vide supra*, p. 149.
[29] Hahn, §§ 11 and 12.

came Jesus, particularly by those who identified the preëxistent Christ with the Logos. Already in Philo we find the Logos described as the Son of God. Finally (5) in the Nicene theology the term "only-begotten Son of God" refers to the Second Person of the Godhead, who was begotten before all eternity of the First Person, whereas man and even angels were created by Him.

Traditionally the words "Son of God" in the Apostles' Creed have been interpreted in the Nicene sense. In support of this interpretation it has been customary to point to the fact that in both creeds they are accompanied by the adjective *monogenes*, "only-begotten." This is a Johannine word, and the Johannine theology, it is urged, was identical with the Nicene. But, in the first place, because the words "Son of God" bore a certain meaning in a fourth-century document, it by no means follows that that must be their meaning in a document of the second century—especially when we remember that the intervening period was a period of progressive reflection upon the relation of Christ to God. Again, it is probable, as we have seen, that the word *monogenes* did not stand in the original text of the Old Roman Symbol. Finally, it is by no means certain that the theology of St. John at the end of the first century was identical with the theology of the Nicene Fathers two centuries and a quarter later. According to Thayer's Lexicon, *monogenes* is to be translated in the New Testament, even in St. John's Gospel, by "only" simply, not by "only-begotten"; and is applied by St. John to the his-

toric Christ, not to the divine Word incarnate in Christ.

Hence it may be argued that in the Symbol likewise it is the historic, not the preëxistent, Christ which is described as the Son of God. For the Symbol goes on to declare that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, was "born of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin," and there is no hint in the whole Symbol as to His preëxistence; whereas the Nicene Creed, on the other hand, is careful to state that the Only-begotten Son of God was "begotten by His Father before all worlds" and was simply "*incarnate* by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary." This argument, however, is not absolutely conclusive; for (as the reader will see if he consults the Appendix)[30] Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian all held the preëxistence and even the eternal generation of the Son of God, while insisting strongly on his being *born* of the Virgin.

The exact force to be attached to the word "Son" in the Symbol is therefore difficult to determine. It may refer to the eternal generation of the preëxistent Christ, or the framers of the Symbol may have used the term "Son of God" in one of its earlier senses: either as a title belonging to Jesus as the Messiah or possibly, as a rigidly literal interpretation of the Symbol might suggest, as referring simply to the Miraculous Birth.[31] Lastly, they may have inserted the title simply by virtue of tradition without limiting its rich

[30]Nos. 1, 7, 8, 9, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31, 34, 36, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 55.

[31]So Holl, in the article referred to in note 13.

and varied connotation. Our choice among these possible interpretations will depend upon our interpretation of the Symbol as a whole, and hence we must postpone further discussion of the problem until our next chapter.[32]

OUR LORD. Professor McGiffert regards this as a later insertion on the ground that Tertullian fails to quote the words.[33] But it is more than likely that they stood in the creed which Irenaeus knew.[34] Furthermore, the omission of the commonest of all Jesus' titles, next to the title Christ—if indeed the latter was still regarded as a title and not as a part of his name at the time when the Roman Symbol was adopted—would be strange, even in so brief a summary of the Christian Faith as the Roman Symbol supplies. We must remember that in the first century to "confess Jesus Christ as Lord" was regarded as the very essence of Christianity.[35] Finally, the argument from silence is in this case more than usually precarious. In both the passages in Tertullian where we feel the omission most,[36] Tertullian is concerned only with what may be termed the objective truths regarding Christ, not with proclaiming the Church's allegiance to him. In the mouth of a candidate for baptism, on the other hand, an acknowledgment of Christ as Lord would be so natural as to be almost inevitable.

[32] *Vide infra,* pp. 234ff.

[33] See Appendix, Nos. 46, 47, 48, 51, 55.

[34] See Appendix, Nos. 36, 37, 38, 41, 44, 45.

[35] *Vide supra,* p. 108.

[36] Appendix, Nos. 48 and 51, where Tertullian seems to be quoting *R* most closely.

THE ONE WHO WAS BORN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MARY THE VIRGIN. The reader will note at once that the Old Roman Symbol here has a single article—therein differing from our familiar Apostles' Creed, which has two: "who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Inasmuch as each of the other articles of the Symbol contains but a single assertion, we are justified in assuming that this is also the case here. What then is that assertion? The order of words in the Greek[37] puts the stress upon the word "born."

Now if we examine the second-century Fathers, we find that two things upon which they are continually insisting are that Jesus was actually born and that he actually died, facts which the Hellenists universally denied. It is probable, therefore, that these two facts are likewise what the Old Roman Symbol is concerned to insist upon in this article and the articles which immediately follow; that the aim is to shut the door of the Church against Hellenistic heresy. Certainly the Symbol does so most effectually. As against the idea that Christ was wholly a spiritual being and that his body was simply a phantom, it asserts that he was born, was crucified, and was buried. As against the alternative theory of the Hellenists that the heavenly Christ united Himself with the man Jesus at his baptism and abandoned him before his crucifixion, it lays

[37] τὸν γεννηθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου, not τὸν ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου γεννηθέντα.

down that the one who was born and was crucified and buried was himself the Christ.[38]

If this interpretation of these articles be correct—and it grows upon one the more he steeps himself in the contemporary literature—it follows that the reference to the manner of Jesus' birth, like the reference to the dates of his crucifixion and his resurrection, is secondary. The purpose of the phrases "under Pontius Pilate" and "on the third day" in the Symbol is clearly to designate the Crucifixion and Resurrection, respectively, as datable historical facts. Similarly the intent of the phrase "of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin" is to mark the Birth as a fact historically attested. If so, it follows that the words "the Virgin" are merely an identificatory appositive; that the Symbol is not immediately concerned to assert the *Virgin* Birth. The phraseology employed seems to support this view. Had the virginity of Mary been the question at issue, the framers of the Symbol would assuredly have written, "who was born . . . of a virgin (*sc.*) Mary." The language which they actually employ, however, is "who was born . . . of Mary *the* (*sc.* well-known) Virgin."

This is evidently the interpretation which Irenaeus and Tertullian placed upon the article. It is clear that both regard the reference to Jesus' birth from a human mother as the essential element. Irenaeus, in

[38]Compare what has been said above on p. 172 as to the structure of the second section of the Symbol; especially as to the use of the articles in the original Greek, and as to the insertion of relative pronouns in the Latin.

the passages in which he seems to be writing with a creed in mind, never refers to the Holy Spirit in connection with Jesus' birth.[39] The same is true of Tertullian with two very doubtful exceptions.[40] Further, the fact that Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Tertullian sometimes employ the language, "born of Mary" or "Son of Mary," without the addition of "the Virgin,[41] shows that the point which they regard of especial importance is, not that Jesus was born of a virgin, but that he was "born of a woman."

Elsewhere in early Christian literature we find this article of the Christian Faith reduced to the single word "born."[42] One instance may be singled out as particularly striking. In the so-called *Sacramentary of Pope Gelasius,* which probably represents the ritual of the church at Rome as it was about the sixth century, the following questions are addressed to the candidate in the baptismal service:

Q. Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?
A. I do.
Q. Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, that *he was born* and that he suffered?
A. I do.

[39]See Appendix, Nos. 36, 40, 41, 43.

[40]See Appendix, Nos. 47, 48, 51, 54. The exceptions are 46 and 55. These two exceptional references differ from one another and from the article in the Old Roman Symbol so markedly in their phraseology as to suggest that Tertullian is not quoting the Symbol, but that the phrases in question are in each case additions of his own. It is possible, therefore, that the Old Roman Symbol originally did not contain the words "of the Holy Spirit" here.

[41]E.g., Appendix, Nos. 1, 2, 12, 41, 47.

[42]E.g., Appendix, Nos. 1, 10, 12, 42.

Q. Dost thou believe also in the Holy Spirit, Holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh?

A. I do.[43]

What we have here is clearly the Old Roman Symbol put into an interrogative form, save that the second section of the Symbol is abbreviated. It will be noted that the article we are considering is abbreviated into the single word "born." We may regard this as an authoritative interpretation of the article by the Roman church itself.

Paradoxical as it may seem, therefore, the Virgin Birth, in the narrowly literal sense of the term, cannot be regarded as a doctrine asserted by the Old Roman Symbol. The framers of the Symbol unquestionably believed it to be an historical fact; in the second century most Christians so regarded it. But it is important to distinguish the faith which a creed asserts from the facts, historical or other, which it assumes. The former alone constitutes its authoritative content. The faith expressed in the article of the Old Roman Symbol which we are considering is simply that Jesus was genuinely born. The article does not even assert (primarily) that he was born of God;[44] that had been stated previously in the phrase "His

[43]Hahn, § 31 *e*.

[44]*Cf.* what has been said above (note 40) as to the likelihood that the words "of the Holy Spirit" are a later insertion in the Symbol. Even if we assume them to be original, their function here is simply to call attention to the *historical* fact. In the Apostles' Creed, of course, where this article is broken up into two: "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," both the divine and the human parentage of Jesus are asserted.

only Son." Nor, as we review the situation, was there any necessity for the Church to assert that Jesus was born of a virgin; that the opponents of the Church were only too predisposed to accept. Indeed, had the historic tradition not been so definite, the Church herself might have been inclined to deny it. She was engaged in defending the holiness of the married state against the pruriency of Hellenism; and moreover her contention that the birth of Jesus was truly human would have been all the stronger had she been able to point to a human father as well as to a human mother. But she was appealing to history, and she had to take the historical tradition as she found it; and, moreover, the Virgin Birth was inextricably associated in her mind with the idea of the Divine Fatherhood.

THE ONE WHO WAS CRUCIFIED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE AND BURIED, THE THIRD DAY ROSE FROM AMONG THE DEAD, ASCENDED INTO THE HEAVENS, SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER, WHENCE HE IS TO COME TO JUDGE LIVING AND DEAD. The definite article which introduces these clauses in the Greek and the relative pronoun which introduces them in the Latin (represented in the above translation by the words "the one who") bind them into a group. The primary function of the group, as we have just seen, was doubtless to deny the current Hellenistic differentiation between the heavenly and the human Christ. At the same time, we can hardly think that the framers of the Symbol were utterly in-

sensible of the religious values attaching to the several articles, particularly when we note that the last clause even in the Greek is introduced by a relative conjunction and stated in the indicative (not the participial) mood.

The clauses reproduce primitive teaching. In details, however, they display second-century influence. The emphasis upon the immediacy of the Second Advent, which was so prominent a feature of Primitive Christianity, is notably absent. The second-century Church still looked for a Second Advent; but some generations had already passed away without Christ's coming, and it was realized that His coming might be still longer delayed.[45] Her thought in consequence turned from the future to the present. The moral struggle became uppermost, and her members no longer looked forward with assurance to a speedy end to that struggle. They had become adjusted to the thought that they were likely to be called upon to live out the full span of their lives and to find their full reward only in the Resurrection. This emphasis upon the moral struggle is reflected in the Symbol by the fact that the judgment of Christ is stressed to the exclusion of any reference to His future kingdom.

One other trace of second-century influence is to be found in the use of the active verbs "rose" and

[45] *Cf.* the interesting discussion in the third chapter of II Peter, which is now generally believed to be a pseudonymous document of the second century. *Cf.* also I Clement xxiii; II Clement xii.

"ascended," in place of the passives "was raised"[46] and "was taken up,"[47] which more commonly occur in earlier documents.

AND IN (THE) HOLY SPIRIT. We can only speculate upon the conception which the framers of the Old Roman Symbol entertained regarding the Holy Spirit. It can hardly have been the Nicene conception of the Holy Spirit as the Third Person in the Triune God; for that conception had not yet been clearly worked out.[48] Besides, the Symbol formally distinguishes both Christ and the Holy Spirit from God. Primarily, no doubt, they thought of the spiritual and moral power and enlightenment which had manifested itself in the Church, and before the founding of the Church in the Prophets. In view of the absence of the definite article, we might be tempted to translate this phrase in the Symbol, "and in *a* holy spirit," were it not that in the New Testament and the early Fathers the article is not infrequently omitted where the reference is clearly to the Holy Spirit as a divine being.[49] But we may be assured that they thought of the Holy Spirit as more than a mere experience, more than an

[46]E.g., Acts ii. 24, iii. 15, 26, and uniformly; Romans iv. 24f., vi. 4, 9, vii. 4, viii. 11, x. 9, I Corinthians xv. 4, and almost uniformly in St. Paul's Epistles according to the best Greek text (except in I Thessalonians iv. 14); on the other hand, the active "rose" occurs in the second-century conclusion to St. Mark (xvi. 9).

[47]E.g., St. Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 2, ii. 32f.; Ephesians i. 20; I Timothy iii. 16.

[48]See H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church* (London, 1912), pp. 11-94, where full references to the original sources may be found.

[49]See Thayer, *s.v.*

"influence"; that they regarded it as an emanation from God, the cause of the spiritual experience. The precise relation of the Holy Spirit to God the Father and to Christ was still, however, a matter for discussion.

HOLY CHURCH, REMISSION OF SINS. Did these articles form part of the original Roman Symbol? They almost certainly formed a part of it in the time of Cyprian (*c.* 250 A.D.); for Cyprian tells us that in the African churches of his day it was customary to ask a candidate at baptism, "Dost thou believe in remission of sins and eternal life through Holy Church?"[50] As interrogations at baptism were usually based upon the baptismal symbol,[51] we may assume that the articles we are considering, or something like them, stood in the African creed; and, as we know from Tertullian[52] and from citations in later writers, the African creed was derived from that of Rome.

But the words are nowhere cited by Irenaeus or Tertullian, unless the passage from Tertullian numbered 50 in the Appendix is to be interpreted as referring to the Symbol. This argument from silence, is not, to be sure, very conclusive. Irenaeus and Tertullian may have omitted to cite these articles by accident, because of their lack of bearing upon questions under discussion. At the same time we have to reckon with the possibility that these articles were not contained in the Symbol in their day; that they were added dur-

[50]Hahn, § 12.

[51]Hahn, § 31 cites instances as early as the time of Cyprian.

[52]Appendix, No. 48.

ing the period between their day and Cyprian's; i.e., in the first half of the third century, a period during which events occurred at Rome which might well lead to their insertion.

Both phrases are thoroughly primitive. The primitive Christians were conscious of being holy persons—in the scriptural sense of the word "holy," i.e., persons set apart, consecrated to God. They constituted a holy fellowship, which they believed should endure to all eternity: the true Israel, the true "Congregation (Hebrew, *qahal*; Greek, *ekklesia*) of God."[53] They were convinced, likewise, that their sins were forgiven; in particular that at their baptism the sins committed while they were yet ignorant of the gospel were washed away. This intimate connection between baptism and the remission of sins, a connection which was even more stressed in the second century[54] than in the first, makes the presence of an article upon the remission of sins in a baptismal symbol very natural.

Yet by the time of the Old Roman Symbol, a subtle change had come over the conception of the Church. At the beginning, the Church as an earthly institution was amorphous; it was a fellowship, not an organization. Its only recognized head was the Lord Jesus in heaven. On earth its governor and guide was the Holy Spirit. Individual Christians became "apostles" (missionaries), "prophets" (preachers), "teachers"

[53] *Vide supra*, p. 71, note 11.

[54] *Cf.* the passage from Justin quoted on p. 169f., Appendix, No. 50; Barnabas xi.; Hermas *Mandates* IV. iii.

(expounders of the Scriptures), even administrators and leaders, not by election or human appointment, but through inner prompting or natural endowment; i.e., as they themselves reverently believed, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[55] Above all things, the Primitive Church was convinced that the age of revelation was not closed, that prophets in the Church were continually receiving new visions of truth from the Holy Spirit.

The second-century Fathers display a very different idea of the Church.[56] The Church is now an organized institution. It has its officially appointed bishops, elders, and deacons. It no longer looks to inspired prophets for new revelations; it derives its teaching from tradition. Its function is to train its members in the teaching of the Apostles and to exhort them to holy living. The work of the Holy Spirit is practically confined to convincing Christians of the truth of the inherited faith and inspiring them to live in accord with Christian morality. In a word, the Church is holy in the sense of being a divinely founded institution for making men holy. It is the guardian and

[55]What may be termed the "constitutional theory" of the Primitive Church is set forth in Romans xii. 3-8; I Corinthians xii; Ephesians iv. 4-16; I Peter iv. 7-11. That even the authority of the Twelve rested essentially on no other basis than that described above, despite the fact of their appointment by Jesus during his lifeime, is shown by two facts: their admission of St. James, the Lord's brother, into full partnership with themselves (doubtless by reason of his exceptional piety quite as much as by reason of his birth); and their recognition of St. Paul as an apostle, despite the fact that St. Paul, as he himself states with the utmost emphasis in Galatians i. and ii., owed his appointment as an apostle solely to an inner call.

[56]E.g., Appendix, Nos. 36, 45, 48.

teacher of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," as opposed to heretical sects, which by teaching a corrupted faith are emasculating the Christian life.

We must assume that this latter is the sense of the words "Holy Church" in the Old Roman Symbol, whether we regard them as original or as a later addition. But already in the second century an issue regarding the holiness of the Church was emerging which was to occasion at Rome an open schism in the first half of the third century.

Logically, the conception of the Church as an institution for moral and spiritual education implies that her members are sinners in need of such education. Young people do not become members of a school because they are learned; on the contrary they go to school because they are ignorant. Moreover, it is hardly to be expected that all members of a school should take full advantage of the means of intellectual development that the school affords. A school drops from its membership only those who are clearly incapable of profiting by its instruction, and continues to retain many imperfect scholars. Just so, the Catholic Church, when it became fully developed, did not hesitate to retain within her pale men of all stages of moral development. Indeed, she preferred to receive men while still in unconscious infancy. Sin, so to speak, she treated as an inherited disease which it was her business to help her children to combat. She practiced excommunication only where the sinner by flouting her

authority and teaching had rejected her and made her powerless to be of use.

The second-century Church, however, was as yet very far from assenting to this logic. As yet baptism was administered only to adults, and was interpreted as a pledge to amendment of life.[57] Sin was regarded as a violation of this pledge; for, says the writer of the First Epistle of St. John,

> Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.—I John iii. 9.

There was a disposition to question whether for sin committed after baptism there was any remission.[58] The doubt illustrates the moral earnestness of the Church, but it ran counter to experience. As the same writer declares, with an inconsistency which does credit to his sense of fact:

> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—I John i. 8f.

This conflict between theory and experience had its counterpart in a conflict of ecclesiastical policies. To expel from the Church everyone who fell into sin was impossible. There would have been no Church left,

[57] *Cf.* the passage from Justin quoted above, pp. 169f., also Appendix, No. 50.

[58] *Cf.* Hebrews vi. 4-8, x. 26-31; II Peter ii. 20-22; Hermas *Mandates* IV. iii.; *Visions* II. ii.; *Similitudes* IX. xviii.; Irenaeus IV. xxvii. 2; Tertullian *De pudicitia* vii; *De paenitentia* iv., v., vii., ix., xii.; Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* II. xiii.

for even the most saintly fall at times. On the other hand, to permit notorious sinners to remain members of the Church was to condone evil and destroy the Church's morale. Certainly there were some sins—especially apostasy, murder, and sexual vice—of which no true Christian would ever be guilty. Therefore it became customary to differentiate among sins.[59] Minor failings were left for the individual to confess to God in private. Graver faults, especially those which attracted public notice, were confessed in open assembly and atoned for by penances prescribed by the Church, i.e., in practice by the bishop. Major crimes, particularly the three just mentioned, were visited by severance from the Christian community without hope of return. As a result of this discipline, the Church remained a body distinguished for strictness of life.

But as the decades passed, this rigorous discipline became increasingly hard to maintain. We can imagine that Christians born in the Church would not always possess the same zeal that had characterized the original converts. Besides, there were doubtless instances in which excommunication worked hardship, and even injustice. Some excommunicated persons displayed a spirit of godly sorrow which seemed to mark them as worthy of restitution to fellowship. Accordingly, at Rome Bishop Callistus (*c.* 217-222) announced that he was prepared to readmit Christians excommunicated for fornication or adultery, on proof of their sincere repentance as evinced by an especially solemn public profession. This announcement pro-

[59] *Cf.* already I John v. 16f.

voked a storm. Hippolytus, the most prominent of the Roman presbyters, denounced the edict as a profanation of the Church and found many supporters. It seems that these dissidents eventually withdrew from the Church and formed a church of their own, with Hippolytus for bishop.

Thus the two great historic conceptions of the Church as an institution for the first time defined themselves in clear-cut contrast. For Hippolytus, the Puritan, the holiness of the Church was inseparable from the holiness, i.e., the blamelessness, of its members; like Calvin, Hippolytus held that the Church should include only "visible saints." For Callistus, the Catholic, the holiness of the Church was to be found in its power to assimilate and transform sinners; it appertained to its very mission to forgive and restore the penitent, whatever their sins might have been.[60]

If the phrases "Holy Church" and "remission of sins" did not form part of the original Roman Symbol, they were probably added during the Hippolytan schism; their purpose being to declare that the Church as an institution is holy despite the presence in her of unworthy members, and that all sins may be remitted. At the same time it is not impossible to find a satisfac-

[60]It is interesting to find Callistus enunciating, apparently for the first time, the three main pillars of Roman Catholicism: that there must inevitably be in the Church a proportion of sinners, as tares among the wheat; that even an erring bishop must be obeyed because of his office; and the use of our Lord's promise to St. Peter in St. Matthew xvi. 18 as a proof-text for the primacy of the bishop of Rome.

tory explanation of them on the assumption of their originality. In that case the baptismal candidate is called upon to declare his belief that the Church, as opposed to the heretical sects, is the depository of truth and grace; and that his sins will be remitted at his baptism. Both topics, we may be sure, had been included in his catechetical instruction.

A RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH. This article conflicts with the teaching of St. Paul in I Corinthians xv. 35ff.; but it undoubtedly represents the original conception of the Resurrection. The original Christian idea of the Resurrection was almost certainly identical with the common Jewish idea; viz., that as the new heavens and the new earth were to be essentially like the present ones, so the life of the saints in the coming age should be essentially similar to their life in this age; i.e., it should be a life in a physical body. It may be noted that St. Paul's idea that it should be a life in a spiritual body, not a body of flesh and blood, found little favor in the second century. The second-century Fathers in their reaction against the Hellenistic view of matter almost unanimously insisted upon a resurrection of the flesh.[61]

We have now gone through the Symbol clause by clause. Before we proceed to consider it as a whole, it will be convenient to examine the several additions

[61]E.g., Appendix, Nos. 18 and 19; II Clement ix. 1-4; *Martyrdom of Polycarp* xiv. 2; Hermas *Similitudes* V. vii. 2; Tertullian *De resurrectione carnis; et passim.*

to it which the received text of the Apostles' Creed displays.

In regard to the dates and interpretation of these additional clauses we are but little better off than we are in the case of the original Symbol. In no case have we a trustworthy record of the adoption of a clause. All that we have is the collection of creeds and treatises upon the Creed which scholars have gathered together after ransacking the various old libraries of Europe;[62] and all that we can say with absolute assurance is that a given clause is or is not included in a given version of the Creed. The dates of the several creeds and treatises, their provenience, and their authorship are in many cases far from certain. Even where a manuscript ascribes a treatise to a definite author, that ascription is not always reliable; it seems often to be a guess of a copyist. Once again, therefore, the reader should be warned that many results which are categorically laid down here and in other popular books on the Creed are to be regarded as probabilities rather than as certainties. Fortunately none of these additional clauses is of high significance.

In the first section of the Creed the words *Creator of heaven and earth* are added. The earliest extant creed based upon the old Roman Symbol to contain

[62]See Hahn, *op. cit.* In the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 11th ed., Vol. VII, p. 395, the reader will find a translation of a creed discovered since the last edition of Hahn was published. It purports to be a copy of the Creed of St. Jerome (fl. *c.* 400 A.D.), and its discoverer argues that that is what it actually is. It is plainly a creed of the Eastern type, though with some Western features. See also the index to the second volume of Kattenbusch referred to on p. 11, note 10.

these words occurs in a manuscript which was found in the monastery of Bobbio in northern Italy and which from its handwriting must be dated about the seventh century.[63] But the creed which Eusebius of Caesarea presented at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. contained the words "Maker of all things visible and invisible," and that phrase, or its equivalent, is found in all subsequent Eastern creeds. In paraphrases of the Old Roman Symbol itself, similar expressions are found as early as the second century.[64] The insertion of such expressions became natural as soon as the use of "Father" in the sense of "Creator" became unfamiliar, and men in speaking of the Fatherhood of God came to think primarily of the relation of the Father to the Son. The addition in no way changes the force of the section, but only safeguards its original signification.

The article relating to the birth of Jesus was changed to read: *conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary the Virgin.* The addition of the words "conceived by" appears for the first time in a creed presented (apparently by a Gallic bishop) at a council held at Ariminum (modern Rimini) in northern Italy in 359 A.D.[65] Thenceforward this form of the article becomes increasingly common, especially in Gallic creeds.[66] The change is obviously due simply to a

[63]Hahn, § 66.
[64]But *cf.* Hahn, § 31 *a.*
[65]Hahn, § 166.
[66]*Ibid.*, index, *s.v. conceptus.*

desire for historical completeness and has no doctrinal significance other than that noted above.[67]

In the Apostles' Creed the account of the Passion is expanded to read: "*suffered* under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, *dead*, and buried." The first Western creed to contain the article in precisely this form is that of Caesarius, who was bishop of Arles in Gaul from 513 to 543 A.D.[68] The substitution of "suffered under Pontius Pilate" for "was crucified under Pontius Pilate" is, however, frequent in theological literature from the second century onward.[69] In point of fact, "suffered" (*pathonta*) expressed the contention of the Church even better than the concrete word "crucified"; for the Hellenistic contention was that Christ as pure spirit must have been immune from "passion." The substitution of "died" for "was buried" occurs in the baptismal interrogations prescribed in the so-called *Canons of Hippolytus*,[70] attributed to the Roman presbyter of the third century with whom we have already become acquainted.[71] The creed of "Nicetas," of whom more anon, seems to have read, "under Pontius Pilate suffered, was crucified, and died," thus combining the two alterations.[72] Our Apostles' Creed

[67]Page 186, note 44.

[68]Hahn, § 62.

[69]E.g., Appendix, Nos. 10 and 40; *cf.* also Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 31, 32, 34, 36, 40, 41, 42, 43, 54, 55.

[70]Hahn, § 31 *d.*

[71]*Vide supra*, p. 196. This document in the form in which we have it has suffered much interpolation, but it is possible that its kernal is genuine.

[72]Hahn, § 40.

goes one step further and restores "was buried." We have here an excellent illustration of the fact that the Apostles' Creed was a gradual growth. The alteration obviously has no doctrinal significance.

He descended into Hades. By Hades is meant, of course, not the place of eternal punishment, but (as the American Book of Common Prayer correctly explains) "the place of departed spirits," i.e., Sheol, the place whither all souls, the souls of the good and the souls of the wicked alike, descend to await reunion with their bodies at the general resurrection. The earliest extant creeds to contain this article—or its equivalent, "He descended into the lower region(s)"—are the statement of faith put forth at the Fourth Council of Sirmium in 359 A.D., that put forth by the Synod of Nike in the same year, and that drawn up at Constantinople in the year following.[73] But we are informed that, at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, reported it as part of the Jerusalem creed,[74] and there is some indication that about the same period it was contained in Armenian and Egyptian creeds.[75] All these creeds belong to the Eastern group which developed independently of the Old Roman Symbol. The article, therefore, seems to have originated in the East. The first creed directly related to the Old Roman Symbol to include it seems to have been that of Aquileia; in which, Rufinus tells us, it occurred in his day (*c.* 400

[73] *Ibid.* §§ 163, 164, 167.

[74] *Ibid.*, note 373 on page 133.

[75] *Ibid.*, § 138f.

A.D.).[76] It does not become common in Western creeds, however, until the seventh century.[77]

Rufinus is unable to state definitely the motive for its insertion, and we can only conjecture what that motive was. Four possibilities present themselves: (1) It need not necessarily add anything at all to the meaning of the Creed. In the thought of the early centuries death involved a descent into Hades; and it is possible that the addition, like the addition of the word "dead" itself, was made simply for the sake of completeness, in order to make clear that Jesus underwent death in all its fulness. (2) We find the article used to exclude the idea, first made prominent by Apollinaris in the second quarter of the fourth century, that Christ had no human soul; that in him the Logos took the place of a human soul. That this was the original purpose of the article, however, seems to be disproved by the chronology. The article was already to be found in Eastern creeds before the time of Apollinaris. It may be, however, that Apollinaris had precursors. (3) Already in I Peter iii. 19 and iv. 6 we find the idea that Christ descended into Hades to preach the gospel to the dead, who otherwise would not have heard it; and this idea is frequent in second-century literature.[78] It seemed a natural deduction

[76]Migne, *Patrologia Latina,* Vol. XXI, p. 356.

[77]See Hahn, index, *s.v.* Höllenfahrt.

[78]*Cf.* the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* x. 40ff.; Justin Martyr *Dialogue* lxxii. 4; Irenaeus III. xx. 4, IV. xxii. 1, xxvii. 2; Tertullian *de anima* lv. In Hermas *Similitudes* IX. xvi. 5 we find a similar purpose assigned to the death and consequent descent into Hades of the Apostles. *Cf.* also *supra,* p. 162.

from the universality of the gospel and the universality of man's need of it. (4) We also find in early literature the idea that Christ descended to "burst the gates of Hades," and so make possible the Resurrection of the Dead; often with the added notion that when he broke out of Hades he took the Prophets and other Old Testament saints with him.[79] Rufinus' statement of this last view is worth quoting for its quaintness:

> As when a hook concealed in a bit of food is seized by a fish, not merely does the fish not remove the food from the hook, but he himself is drawn out of the deep to be food for others; so he who holds sway over death seized the body of Jesus in death, not realizing that the hook of divinity was in it; and when he had devoured it, he was caught and pulled up from the deep to become food for others, and the bars of the infernal regions were burst. . . . Christ's divinity, therefore, did not suffer any injury or wrong in the flesh. The divine nature descended into death through the flesh to work salvation; not in order that like mortals it should be retained by death, but in order that rising by its own power it might open the portals of death.[80]

The truth is that Jesus' descent into Hades was taken for granted from the very beginning;[81] for the earliest Christians had no doubt as to the reality of his death, and death for them necessarily involved a

[79]E.g., Ignatius *Magnesians* ix. 2, the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, and the Fourth Creed of Sirmium referred to above. *Cf.* also Revelations i. 18.

[80]Migne, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXI, p. 355.

[81]Acts ii. 31; Romans x. 7; Ephesians iv. 9.

descent into Hades. The religious implications of the Descent into Hades, on the other hand, were discovered only in the course of later reflection. The question as to which was the original purpose of the clause is complicated by the fact that the clause does not seem to have been added by any single act of the Church as a whole, but was added at different times by different churches, and possibly therefore from different motives. To some the Descent into Hades was involved in their belief in Jesus' entire humanity; to others it was involved in their belief in the universality of the gospel; to others again it served to ensure the Resurrection and the ultimate frustration of the power of death; while the deliverance of the Old Testament saints illustrated the justice of God. In the case of this article the differentiation of the original motive from later corruscations lacks its usual interest. Can we speak of an "original" motive in a case where the addition of an article does not seem to have been the result of a single decision?

"On the right hand of *God* the Father *Almighty*." This enlargement of the original text is obviously due to the influence of the first article. It is first found in a Spanish creed of the fourth century and in a Gallic creed of the fifth.[82] It does not change the sense materially, though a slight change in nuance is involved. In the Old Roman Symbol, especially in the original Greek form of it, the words "the Father" here sug-

[82]Hahn, §§ 53, 61.

gest "his[83] Father," i.e., the Father of Christ; whereas the word "Father" in the first section of the original Symbol means, as we have seen, the "Father of the universe." (This, by the way, is an interesting reminder that we must avoid woodenness in interpreting a Creed. Because a word is used with one meaning in one place, that does not prove that it may not be used with a different connotation in another.) In the Apostles' Creed, of course, the word "Father" has the same meaning in both cases: it means the First Person in the Godhead.

"Holy *Catholic* Church." This phrase occurs in the baptismal interrogations which were addressed to a convert about 220 A.D., if we may trust a narrative of the martyrdom of Pope Callistus; which may, however, be considerably later than the event.[84] It occurs also in the creed of the church of Jerusalem in the fourth century.[85] The first intimation of the presence of the word "catholic" in a formal Western creed is in an expository lecture on the Creed delivered sometime between 340 and 370 A.D., just where or by whom is not quite clear.[86] From the end of the fourth century, it appears with increasing frequency in Western creeds, especially in Spain and Gaul.

The phrase "Catholic Church" is neither biblical nor primitive; it emerged out of the doctrinal con-

[83]In Greek the definite article in such connections usually has the force of a possessive pronoun.

[84]Hahn, § 31 *a*.

[85]*Ibid.*, § 124.

[86]*Ibid.*, § 45. The title in the manuscript attributes the lecture to St. Ambrose.

troversies of the second century.[87] The adjective "catholic" is derived from the Greek phrase *kath' holou*, "as a whole." (The Greek word *holos* is a cognate of our English word "whole.") The conception embodied in the phrase "the Church as a whole" may be illustrated by the following quotation from Irenaeus:[88]

> The Church, having received this preaching and this faith (as we have said), although she is scattered over the whole world, she carefully guards it as a united household. She uniformly believes these (teachings) as if she had but one mind and one heart, and she harmoniously preaches, teaches, and hands them on as if she were possessed of but one mouth. For the languages of the world are divers, but the sense of the tradition is one and the same. Neither do the churches established in the Germanies hold any other faith and tradition, nor do those in the Spains or among the Celts or in the East or in Egypt or in Libya or those situated in the heart of the empire. But just as the sun, God's creature, is one and the same throughout the world, so also does the preaching of the truth shine everywhere and illumine all men who are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth.—Irenaeus I. x. 2.

Irenaeus in this passage is setting up the common faith of the whole Church as a standard to which he can appeal against the innovations of heretics. Catholicity for him, and for the Church Fathers in general, did not mean broad-mindedness, as it does in our modern speech, but orthodoxy. For the standard of orthodoxy

[87]The earliest instance of its use is in Ignatius *Smyrnaeans* viii. 2. It does not become a standard phrase until the third and fourth centuries.

[88]*Cf.* also Appendix, Nos. 36, 40, 45, 48.

recognized in the second century was already that defined later by Vincent of Lerinum: *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.* Later on we even find the Fathers speaking of a local church as a "catholic" church, meaning a church which adhered to the orthodox faith and fellowship. By "Holy Catholic Church" in the Apostles' Creed is meant, therefore, the historic, original Church, as opposed to the heretical sects.

The communion of saints, or, as the Latin (*sanctorum communio*) may equally well be translated, *participation in holy things.* This clause is first attested in an exposition of the Creed ascribed on its title-page to Nicetas, who was bishop of Aquileia from 454 to 465 A.D.[89] This ascription can hardly be correct. It is hard to believe that the creed implied in the exposition was the creed of Aquileia; it differs too markedly from the creed of Aquileia as we know it from Rufinus.[90] Nevertheless, the treatise is probably

[89]Migne, *op. cit.,* Vol. LII, pp. 865ff.

[90]It has been suggested that the author of the treatise was a certain Nicetas mentioned in Gennadius *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* xxii (Migne, *op. cit.,* Vol. LVIII, p. 1075) as the author of a treatise on the Creed. Gennadius describes him as *episcopus Romatianae civitatis,* by which may be meant the town of Remesiana in the region of the Danube. Consequently, some writers refer to this creed without qualification as the "creed of Nicetas of Remesiana in Dacia" and proceed to build a heavy superstructure of theory upon this identification (*e.g.,* A. E. Burn in the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 11th ed., Vol. VII, p. 395). It should be noted, however, that the identification rests upon a whole series of conjectures. (1) In the Migne edition of Gennadius the name is given as "Niceas," not "Nicetas." This, however, looks like a printer's, or more likely a scribe's, error. (2) The MSS. vary in the spelling of the name of the town. (3) Other identifications of *civitas Romatiana* have been suggested

to be dated somewhere in the fifth century. The phrase occurs also in the so-called Creed of St. Jerome (*fl. c.* 400 A.D.).[91] We may therefore regard the clause as a late fourth-century or a fifth-century addition.

The phrase *sanctorum communio* is very rare in patristic literature prior to its insertion in the Creed. It first occurs in St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.), who uses it in urging, as against the Donatists, that those who had fallen away under persecution should be readmitted after penance to "participation in holy things," i.e., to the sacraments.[92] There is a reference in the first decree of the Synod of Nismes[93] (394 A.D.) to Manichean priests who were seducing the faithful, having gained admittance to "participation in holy things" by virtue of letters from their own bishops in the East. It is not quite clear from the context whether the phrase here refers to the administration of the sacraments or to participation in the

(see Hahn, *op. cit.*, note 72 on p. 48). (4) We hear of several other bishops named Nicetas, particularly in Gaul. (5) The title in the MSS. expressly mentions Nicetas of Aquileia. It is not a necessary inference that its author, while he can hardly have been Nicetas of Aquileia, must have been named Nicetas. We must reckon with the possibility that the scribe who added the title was simply fathering a treatise whose authorship he did not certainly know upon the well-known bishop of Aquileia. The point is interesting as an illustration of the fact mentioned above, that many assertions regarding the history of the Apostles' Creed have attained currency which are at best probable guesses.

[91] *Vide supra,* note 62.

[92] Migne, *op. cit.,* Vol. XXXVI, p. 379, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357, Vol. XLIII, 835. *Cf.* the discussion of these passages in Kattenbusch, *Das apostolische Symbol,* Vol. II, pp. 931 ff.

[93] Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte,* Vol. II, p. 62.

funds raised for the support of the clergy. These are practically the only instances of the occurrence of the phrase prior to the time of Nicetas which Professor Kattenbusch has been able to unearth. It will be observed that in both cases *sanctorum* is neuter.

"Nicetas," on the other hand, in his beautiful interpretation of the phrases "Holy Catholic Church" and "Communion of Saints," clearly understands it as masculine:

> What is the Church but the congregation of all saints? From the beginning of the world, the patriarchs, Abraham Isaac and Jacob, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, and all other righteous men who have ever lived, who now live, or who ever shall live are one Church; since they have been sanctified by one faith and manner of life, sealed by one Spirit, and [so] made into one Church, of which Christ is the Head, as the Scripture teaches. Nay more, even angels, even the heavenly potentates and powers are bound together in this one Church. . . . In this one Church, therefore, believe that you will find the Communion of Saints.[94]

"Nicetas," in other words, takes it as a definition of the previous words, "Holy Catholic Church," which is the interpretation evidently favored by those who fixed the punctuation of the American Book of Common Prayer. On the whole, it seems likely that this was the original sense; although some later medieval theologians took it to refer to participation in the sacraments.[95] After all, in Catholic feeling the two interpretations were not far apart; for, as the preface

[94]Migne, *op. cit.*, Vol. LII, p. 871.
[95]Hahn, § 74.

to the *Sanctus* (one of the oldest portions of the Canon of the Mass) proclaims, the "Angels, Archangels, and all the Host of Heaven" join with the saints on earth at every Eucharist.

It is natural to presume that this clause, like other clauses, was inserted in the Creed to exclude some teaching regarded as heretical; but if so, it is hard to discover what that teaching was. The emergence of the phrase in the writings of St. Augustine might suggest that it was Donatism, were it not that the phrase seems never to have occurred in African creeds. It has been suggested that it was directed against Vigilantius, who about 400 A.D. conducted an agitation against the adoration of saints. But Vigilantius did not deny the Communion of Saints, as Nicetas defined it; he was only protesting against the worship of saints' relics. May we allow ourselves to imagine that for once an article was inserted in the Creed for other than controversial reasons; that the sole purpose of the article is to lift the thought of the Christian to a full sense of the glorious fellowship in which he stands?

The resurrection of the body. The substitution of the word "body" for "flesh" here is peculiar to the English Book of Common Prayer and to versions of the Apostles' Creed derived from it. It first occurs in the translation of the Creed given in the *Necessary Doctrine and Erudition of Every Christian Man* put forth in 1543 by authority of Henry VIII. The motive of the change is obviously to bring the language of the Creed into harmony with the statements regard-

ing the Resurrection in I Corinthians xv. It involves no essential alteration in doctrine. For the original purpose of the article, as we have seen, was to insist that the future life should not be a mere life of spiritual contemplation, but a life essentially like unto this, a life of activity and fellowship. This idea is preserved in the change.

Life everlasting. These words formed the conclusion of the African version of the Old Roman Symbol as early as the time of Cyprian (250 A.D.),[96] and are the commonest of all additions. The Old Roman Symbol, indeed, ends too abruptly. That the life introduced by the resurrection of the flesh is to be eternal is of course to be taken for granted; but it is better that this should be expressed. It is worthy of note that the second section of the Symbol displays a similar defect. Considered as a summary of the primitive faith, it is unsatisfactory in that it ends with the Judgment and says nothing about the Messianic Age to follow; in other words it leaves out the very heart of the primitive hope. The Nicene Creed makes good this omission in the second section by adding the words, "whose kingdom shall have no end." In the process of revision which transformed the Old Roman Symbol into the Apostles' Creed, no attempt was made to correct the second section, but this reference to the hope of eternal blessedness was added to the third.

It should be noted that the Greek word translated "eternal" (*aionios*) had for early Christian ears a

[96]Hahn, § 12 and *supra*, p. 190. It is added also in our text of the creed of Marcellus of Ancyra.

richer connotation than the word "eternal" has for us. In ordinary Greek the word *aionios* had, to be sure, the same connotation as the English, i.e., it denoted infinite duration simply. But Christians trained in the Bible could find in the word also a reminder of "the age (*aion*) to come" after this present age had run its course, the ideal world in which God's will should prevail and Satan's malign rule should be overthrown.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OLD ROMAN SYMBOL: A CRITICAL ESTIMATE

The Old Roman Symbol a Fundamentalist Document—*The Religious Values It Conserves*—Their Permanent Necessity—*Defects of the Old Roman Symbol*—*A.* Its Neglect of Christ's Ethical Teaching—*B.* Its Neglect of Certain Elements in the Primitive Gospel, namely: (1) The Atonement; (2) The Messianic Hope; (3) Belief in the Continuance of Prophecy; (4) The Conception of the Church as a Fellowship of Spiritual Persons—*C.* Its Omission to Assert Explicitly the Divinity of Christ—The Probable Reason for This Omission—Perils Involved in the Logos Christology.

THE Old Roman Symbol is a Fundamentalist document, the oldest which we possess. To say this is not to disparage it; for Fundamentalism has time and again rendered valuable service to the Church. Fundamentalism may be defined as the effort to perpetuate the Christian life of the past by resisting any change in the ideas by which the saints of the past were inspired. The purpose of the Old Roman Symbol was to bind the Church to the original, Jewish form of Christianity, and to prevent its original teachings from being infected by the Hellenism by which the Church was surrounded. Specifically, it repudiates the Hellenistic idea of God as the remote and essentially characterless Absolute, the Hellenistic idea of Christ as a being devoid of a material nature, and the Hellenistic idea of the future life as a purely "spiritual" existence. We may list its positive teachings as follows:

1. The Symbol maintains, in the first place, that the universe was created by the Most High, the only God and is entirely under His control. In consequence, the universe is essentially good, and the course of events is dominated by a wise and benevolent purpose. Human nature, also, man's body no less than his mind, is potentially good.

2. The Symbol makes no attempt to harmonize this with the existence of evil in the world and in the human heart—its framers were not philosophers constructing a system—but it offers a practical solution for the problem of evil. It teaches that those who do the will of God the Father Almighty will eventually receive their full and satisfying reward; if not in this life, then after the Resurrection. For the Symbol teaches that however the forces of evil may overwhelm the faithful in this life, this life is not all. A future life awaits everyone, in which everyone will receive full justice. It is to be more than a life of the intellect; it is also to be a physical life, with all that physical life implies: eyes to see with, ears to hear with, hands to work with, and the capacity for "passion," i.e., for feeling and emotion. In a word, it is to be a life of activity and fellowship, as well as a life of contemplation. The only question is whether its capacities are to be exercised in endless suffering or in endless happiness.

3. To attain the good things which God has in store for men, men have only to take Christ as their Lord and to follow him. For Christ exemplified in his own life both the conduct which God requires and also the

destiny which awaits those who do God's will. Christ, the Symbol asserts, completely shared our common humanity from birth to death. He therefore met the full force of evil and suffered the worst that it can inflict, without wavering in his loyalty to God. The outcome demonstrates the power and the faithfulness of God. For through the power of God, Christ rose from the dead and ascended to God's right hand, to the place of honor and of intimate communion which his perfect fulfilment of the divine will made his due. Those who follow in his footsteps will in the end likewise rise and share his triumph.

4. There is, however, a terrible converse to this. For those who reject Christ and Christ's example, sure condemnation is in store; because Christ is more than our Exemplar, he is also to be our Judge. The optimism of the Symbol is profoundly moral; it holds out happiness only to the faithful and heroic.

5. The fact that the conditions of salvation are moral, not intellectual, implies that salvation is open to any man. Any man can elect to take Christ as his Lord. The Symbol, in other words, gives no countenance to the Hellenistic distinction between those who are capable of salvation and those who are not.

6. The Symbol asserts that not sin itself can bar a man from salvation; for sin, certainly sin committed before baptism, will be remitted.

The question whether the Symbol recognizes the possibility of the remission of post-baptismal sin is, as we have seen, a complicated one, the answer to which

depends in part upon whether we regard the article upon the Remission of Sin as a portion of the original Symbol or as a third-century addition. Whichever alternative we adopt, we must assume that the authors of the Symbol believed that ordinary sins could be remitted even after baptism; the only uncertainty is as to whether they held that the great sins, particularly the three sins of adultery, murder, and apostasy, could be remitted. On the whole an affirmative answer to this question is the more probable. If the clause is a third-century addition, its very purpose is to assert that even the greater sins may be remitted. If, on the other hand, the clause formed a part of the original, second-century text, it is not necessary to assume that its framers denied the possibility of the remission *by God* of the greatest sin conceivable. It is true that in the second century the three sins mentioned were visited with perpetual excommunication from the Church; but according to the commonest theory of excommunication, excommunication from the Church did not necessarily exclude the sinner from God's forgiveness. The sinner was "delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in order that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus";[1] the hope being that the Church's severity would induce in him a repentance which would elicit the divine forgiveness. It should be said, however, that St. Matthew xviii. 17f.[2] suggests the sterner view, namely, that exclusion from

[1] I Corinthians v. 5.

[2] *Cf.* also St. Matthew xvi. 19; St. John xx. 23.

the Church carried with it exclusion from God's pardon.

7. If a man elect to follow Christ, he will not be left to his own unaided efforts in so doing. For not only is there a God and a Christ above, there is also a Holy Spirit within, which is ever urging men to accept the way of Christ and impelling those who accept Christ on their upward path. In addition, there is the Church, with its revealed truth, its sacraments, its discipline, and its fellowship, to guide and sustain the follower of Christ in his Christian life.

This certainly was a more inspiring and human gospel than Hellenism. Must we not also say that it contains convictions of which the world can never afford to let go?

If we are to face life and all that it brings with unfailing cheerfulness and present a firm front to the allurements and the tyranny of evil, we must have a belief in a loving and invincible God, in whose hands we are safe, if we give ourselves to His service. Without such a faith, not only is there danger lest the hard experiences of life overwhelm our spirits, but we cannot get away from ourselves. For a man's life must center somewhere, and logically there are only two alternatives. Either a man's life must center in himself—and complete self-concentration is insanity —or he must devote himself in the spirit of Christ to the service of God and his fellow men. Logically, too, each of these two services at its highest implies the other. On the one hand, we can serve God only through His children; and on the other, we can hardly

sustain a spirit of high adventure for the betterment of our fellows unless we believe that in striving to combat evil in human life we are fulfilling the intent of the Creator and are copartners with God. Of course, men are not logical or consistent. It is impossible to find either a perfect Christian or, thank God, a perfect egotist. Despite Jesus' warning, we are all more or less serving two masters, and usually fail to recognize clearly which we are serving. But can there be any doubt that the Christian life of devotion constitutes the true human ideal, or that the Christian fellowship with God is essential to man's highest happiness? If so, the belief in an Almighty and Fatherly God must ever be a human necessity.

Nor can the world afford to part with the memory of Christ. He provides us with our needed ideal, and we need the touch of his personality to crystallize our faith in God and to sustain our optimism. Yet Christ must be regarded as a visionary, and his optimism a dream, unless we believe, as the Symbol teaches, that he rose from the dead.

In one sense, of course, Christ's resurrection is not a matter of faith but a matter of historic fact; for the Crucifixion did not end his work. His influence has been more widespread and more lasting than that of any other historic figure. There is a dramatic contrast between the contemporary estimate of him and our own. In his lifetime the Roman emperor dominated the imagination of the world; while, except in the minds of the small handful of Jesus' followers, the Crucifixion occasioned only a brief ripple of local in-

terest. Today Augustus and Tiberius are known to millions only through the mention of them in the Gospels; whereas Jesus' power over men is world-wide; and is destined, we believe, to grow and deepen into complete mastery in the ages to come. As we reflect upon the deathless influence of Christ, we are encouraged to believe that every struggle for the right is worth while; that though the individual may suffer total defeat, the cause for which the martyr dies must and will prevail, and the reality in which the martyr's prayer will ultimately find its answer will transcend his loftiest thought.

But Christ taught more than a perpetuity of influence. He taught that God is not the God of the dead but of the living; that He who loved Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will never, throughout all eternity, deny Himself their companionship.[2] In a word, Jesus believed in personal immortality; and he must have been wrong unless, as the Symbol declares, he himself went to God and still lives with God as an individual.

There is no denying that at present the belief in individual immortality is on the wane among thinking men. This is partly due, no doubt, to the discoveries which psychology is making as to the dependence of mental upon bodily states. But there is also a feeling that the hope of individual immortality is after all a selfish hope; that it is actually more noble to be content with a present fellowship with the Eternal in working to secure greater happiness for the generations yet unborn. It is very doubtful, however,

[2] St. Mark xii. 26f.

whether this type of altruism can ever take the place of the teaching of Christ; not only because it is too lofty for most men at the present stage of the world's spiritual development, but because it is intrinsically insufficient. The just claims of the individual will not be denied, and the Christian hope of immortality has satisfied those claims. It has enabled men to believe in the justice of God—despite the manifest prevalence of injustice in the world, as exemplified supremely in the Cross. It has made it possible for men to work for God with abandon, sure that their true interests are safe in His hand. "I suffer these things," writes the author of the Second Epistle to Timothy, "for I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day." It has brought about a recognition of the dignity of every individual soul, regardless of race or station; in other words, it has been the greatest single influence in the establishment of the democratic ideal. It has made it possible for men to stand by the graveside of a friend unshaken. Here again, surely, are indispensable values.

Not one of these convictions is demonstrable by ordinary intellectual processes. Yet if, as it appears, they are postulates essential to the inspiration of life at its best, we may be sure that the world will never let them die; that these portions of the "faith once for all delivered to the saints" will prove as eternal as any other working hypotheses of proved value. At bottom, we suspect, one thing only threatens the perpetuation of the Christian Faith. We do not mean

science, although an age which has learned to trust the objective demonstrations of science naturally hesitates to rely upon what has not been scientifically proved. These postulates are above either scientific proof or scientific disproof. What really threatens the preservation of the Christian Faith is the hesitation of men to accept it because of the demands which it makes upon them. It takes courage and self-denial, a certain *élan,* to rise to the acceptance of the teaching of Christ. Yet the necessity of its acceptance if life is to rise to its highest level is imperative: and it is in the highest degree unlikely that there will ever cease to be weary and heavy-laden who will be drawn to Christ for rest, or heroic souls who will respond to his appeal.

The Old Roman Symbol, however, is not a perfect formulation of the gospel. Its main defect, undoubtedly, is that it contains no summary of Jesus' ethical revelations. This omission, however, was intentional. The purpose of the Symbol was simply to summarize the religious faith of the Church; the requirements of Christian ethics were imparted to baptismal candidates separately. A picture of the ethical instruction imparted to catechumens in the second century can readily be gained by anyone who will open a translation of the Apostolic Fathers and read the description of the "Two Ways" in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* or in the *Epistle of Barnabas.*[4] Nevertheless, a summary of the Christian religion

[4] *Cf.* also Appendix, No. 20.

which ignores the second of the two Christian commandments is clearly a very imperfect summary.

The Symbol displays two other classes of defects: In the first place, its framers missed some of the values of the primitive gospel; the effort to conserve the past seldom succeeds completely. In the second place, the Symbol, like all Fundamentalist documents, was obsolete before it was composed; it ignores the aspect of truth which its own age was striving to formulate, namely, the Divinity of Christ.

Thus the Symbol, while it insists that Christ really died, omits to say that he died for our sins; in other words, it contains no reference to the primitive doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement. In this, however, it only displays a common second-century characteristic. For in the second century, the doctrine of the Vicarious Atonement tended to fall into the background; probably because its roots were Jewish. To a Jew the death of Christ presented a difficult problem: it seemed hard to reconcile with the justice of God. The function of the idea that Christ's death was vicarious was to effect this reconciliation. But the idea of strict retributive justice was far more deeply seated in the Jewish than in the Gentile mind. Gentile Christians thought of Christ primarily as a revealer of truth and life, a spiritual Savior who entered humanity in order to lift humanity to God.[5] From this point of view the sufferings of Christ presented far less of a difficulty; they were the necessary result of his perfect humanity. The need was not to explain them,

[5]This may be described as the Hellenistic doctrine of the Atonement.

but to insist upon them as historic facts which demonstrated the incredible truth that Christ became flesh; and this the Symbol does. Curiously enough the Symbol here displays an unconscious influence of the Hellenism it was framed to controvert. A Fundamentalist rarely escapes entirely the influence of his age.

The neglect of the idea of Vicarious Atonement mars the completeness of the Symbol as a statement of the primitive gospel. For the doctrine that the death of Christ was an offering for sin has an abiding value. It is a fact of life that we both bear the punishment of others' sins, and also reap the rewards of others' merits; in a word, that we are severally members one of another. The remembrance of our indebtedness to others and of their dependence upon us is an indispensable source of sanity and honest living; and in particular, the thought that Christ endured an undeserved death in order to bring salvation to men must always remain one of his strongest claims upon our loyalty.

We miss in the Symbol, also, the values contained in the primitive Messianic Hope. Indeed, the Old Roman Symbol omits to mention the glories of the Messianic Age altogether; an omission which the Apostles' Creed only in part makes good by its addition of the phrase, "life everlasting."

In form, of course, the primitive Messianic Hope was too naïve to last. We may even say that the expectation of an immediate return of Christ to overthrow all existing society was an offense to common

sense. Yet if we reflect upon what that expectation must have meant to the downtrodden and oppressed who first embraced it, we can see in it something which suggests one of our own strongest convictions. We too are convinced that society, and even the physical conditions of our existence, are out of harmony with the will of God. We too believe, with a faith so deep that we are often unconscious of it, that poverty, disease, oppression, ignorance, and all other conditions which interfere with the development of the fullest life in every man must sometime be done away, and what will virtually be a new world must come, which shall be nothing other than the Kingdom of God. We no longer look for the Kingdom to come by a cataclysm, perhaps, as the earliest Christians did; we rather expect that it will come as a growth. But every reflecting person realizes that at bottom it is moral defects that stand in the way of its coming, and that the conquest of the hearts of all men by the spirit of Christ, a spiritual return of Christ to earth in triumph, is an essential prerequisite to its realization.

But the Church of the second century lacked social outlook; this was a feature of the time. Nothing is more characteristic of the Roman Imperial period than the disappearance of the belief in the perfectibility of society which had animated the philosophizings of Plato and Aristotle. How far this lack of interest in social improvement was due simply to the disappearance of political liberty (why reflect upon social problems when one can do nothing to influence society?), or how far it was a result of other social

causes, is one of the most intriguing, but at the same time one of the most difficult, of historical problems. Certainly the tendency of the time was to dwell solely upon the possibilities of individual happiness, and to assume that the only possibility of happiness lay in the individual's escape from the iron tyranny of the existing world to find satisfaction in the spiritual life within and in the life of the world beyond.

Again, if we are to interpret the Symbol in the light of its age, we must suspect that its framers failed to grasp all the values which the Primitive Church found in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The first Christians believed themselves possessed of a Spirit within them which directed them in all their perplexities,[6] and which was ever leading them into further truth and further insight into the mind of Christ. This monitor, they rejoiced to think, could never be severed from them by time or place. It could not be taken from them as Christ had been. Indeed, they even came to think, the taking away of Christ had proved a blessing; for the Holy Spirit was enlightening their minds as to the meaning of Christ's teaching in a way that Christ himself had been unable to do while on earth. The words attributed to Jesus in St. John xvi. 7-15 express the Church's sense of something which she believed was actually happening in her midst.

By the time of the Old Roman Symbol, however, this confidence in the Holy Spirit had greatly faded. It was found that the prophets who spoke in the Spirit's name were often self-assertive, contentious,

[6] *Cf.* St. Matthew x. 19f.; Acts *passim.*

characterized by vagaries, and in need of being recalled to sanity.[7] There arose false prophets,[8] and the Church recalled that Christ himself had warned them that such should come.[9] It became necessary to try the prophets, first by the test of character;[10] and then, especially when Hellenism began its inroads and its exponents began to assume the rôle of prophets, by the test of the conformity of their teaching with that of Christ and the Apostles.[11] It was probably in part to combat false prophecy that the Standard of Faith was first developed. From employing tradition as a standard by which to measure prophecy, to regarding tradition itself as all sufficient and ignoring prophecy altogether, was an easy step. Already we find St. Paul, in the very earliest of his Epistles, finding it necessary to enjoin his readers, "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesying"; though even he adds in the same breath, "Prove all things."[12]

As a matter of fact, in the second century prophecy, while still recognized in theory, practically died out; and when toward the close of the century the Montanists attempted to revive it, the revival was regarded as *ipso facto* heresy. The disposition of the Church in the second century was to say that the Holy Spirit spoke through the Old Testament Prophets and

[7] I Corinthians xiv.

[8] II Peter ii. 1; I John iv. 1; Revelations ii. 2, 20.

[9] St. Mark xiii. 22.

[10] St. Matthew vii. 15-20; *cf.* also the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,* xiff. and Hermas *Mandates* XI.

[11] I Corinthians xii. 3; I John iv. 1-6; Revelations xix. 10.

[12] I Thessalonians v. 19-21.

through the Apostles, but that His revelation was now complete. The duty of the Christian was simply, with the Spirit's help, to accept whole-heartedly the doctrine of the Apostles, the Standard of Faith. May we say, then, that the very existence of a Standard of Faith and of the Old Roman Symbol amounts to a partial negation of the primitive doctrine of the Holy Spirit?

This exaltation of the principle of authority by the Church of the second century is readily understandable. She was faced with the problem of keeping her faith uncontaminated in a world whose religion was in many respects alien to her own. Christian converts in the second century, like the Jews of Ezra's time, needed to go to school; their prime need was to master and conserve the faith which they had received.

This need was felt already in the first century. Many even of the first generation of Christians required to go to school. The actual conditions in the Primitive Church were in many respects at variance with its theory. The rebukes and admonitions which occur in every one of St. Paul's Epistles show how far the Christians of the first century were from being entirely under the domination of the Spirit. In addition to the frailty which besets the best of men, certain specific causes must have occasioned the presence within the Church of members apt to fall below the highest Christian standards. In the first place, conversions, we learn, often took place by house-

holds.[13] Not merely were the children of Christians regarded as "holy,"[14] i.e., as Christians, but even the slaves and freedmen of a Christian master or mistress seem automatically to have been baptized. Converts from conviction, on the other hand, whether Jews or Gentiles, found it hard to shake off their inherited ideas and prejudices; with the result that almost from the beginning views out of accord with the spirit of the gospel were to be found in the Church. For these reasons, the need of apostolic authority came early to be recognized. We find St. Paul, for instance, exercising it constantly.

But the Symbol's implied insistence upon the principle of authority was more than a temporary expedient; it represents a factor in the religious life of permanent importance. In religion no less than in science, the principle of authority has a real place. It is perilous for the individual to rely exclusively upon his own religious intuitions. It is his duty to compare his findings with the findings of the good and thoughtful of all ages, with the traditions of the Church, and above all with the teachings of Christ.

Yet it is no less perilous for the individual to stifle his own thinking; if only for the reason that to do so precludes any genuine appropriation on his part of the religious heritage of the past. For mere passive—or, to use the theological term, implicit—acceptance of dogma does not mean its appropriation. Indeed, as

[13]Acts xvi. 15, 31; I Corinthians i. 11, 16, xvi. 15; II Timothy i. 16.

[14]I Corinthians vii. 14.

history abundantly illustrates, unthinking acceptance of dogmas nearly always leads to perversion of them. The most penetrating critique of a picture will not take the place of a sight of the picture. If the critique points out beauties in the picture which the ordinary beholder would not see unaided, on the other hand the beholder's own vision is necessary if he is to understand the critique. So it is with life's problems. It is only in the light of our own experience and reflection that we are able to comprehend even the simple words of Christ. In the language of the New Testament, we need that the Spirit within us shall take of the things of Christ and show them unto us.

May we not go further and say that in successive ages, to meet their successive needs or increased capacities, the Holy Spirit vouchsafes entirely new revelations, revelations complementary to those in the New Testament? May we not reckon as examples the modern knowledge of the immutability of natural law (or, to speak more correctly, of the entire regularity of God's workings), the discovery of physical treatments for spiritual ills, the discovery of the bearing of social environment upon the spiritual life of man, or new ethical principles such as the sinfulness of slaveholding or of the suppression of women? If so, what becomes of the finality of the New Testament revelation? The question is too large to enter upon here, and probably it is mainly a matter of definition. We must content ourselves with pointing out that the possibility of an increment of revelation seems to be asserted in St. John xvi. 12-16, and that probably St.

John would say that all these things are revelations from the risen Christ, the Logos. With all the vagaries and extravagances to which it led, the primitive faith in prophecy contained a profound truth. God has never ceased to speak to and through men. Honest thinking when clarified by honest living still arrives independently at truths old and new.

This faltering confidence in the Holy Spirit led to a change in the conception of the nature of the Church. The thought of the Church as a fellowship of persons endowed with the Holy Spirit, owning no authority save that of the Holy Spirit within the individual and that of leaders designated by their superiority in spiritual endowment, was rapidly giving way to the thought of the Church on earth as an organization; a body of persons admitted by a definite rite, and governed by external law and by officers whose right to govern rested upon the regularity of their appointment. This institution, it was coming to be believed, was what Christ founded; its mission being to train its members in the apostolic faith and in the apostolic code of ethics.

Now we have seen that the primitive conception of the Church as a fellowship of individuals all endowed with the Spirit was somewhat of a dream. It was far from being realized in practice. Yet in that dream we surely must recognize the Divine Idea, not merely of the Church, but of society. It surely represents the ideal after which all our social aspirations are feeling, the only possible synthesis of the opposing ideals of democracy and of government by the expert, of Social-

ism and theoretical Anarchism. An ideal society can arise only when all men become inspired with a spirit of good will and become intelligent enough to recognize and follow honest and enlightened leadership. We dare to believe that this is the ultimate goal of civilization.

But the primitive idea of the Church is more than a far-off goal. Like all divine ideas it has its practical meaning for the present. It represents a reality which the purely institutional conception of the Church tends to obscure. Even in our own imperfect age there exists, beside and behind the organizations of religion, a fellowship of the Spirit, a common interest among right thinking men. It is a fellowship which it is impossible to delimit. It cannot be delimited by the criterion of identity of opinion; for men of the highest character differ widely in their opinions, by reason of their varied experience and points of view. It cannot be delimited even by the criterion of conscious loyalty to Christ—something which we should hardly dare to say, were it not Christ's own teaching.

> Not everyone that saith unto *me,* Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of *my Father* who is in Heaven.—St. Matthew vii. 21.
>
> Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother.[15]—St. Mark iii. 35.

These utterances of our Lord illustrate the loftiness of his character, his selfless devotion to the accomplishment of his Father's purposes; and they also teach

[15] *Cf.* also Christ's attitude toward the exorcist who was not a disciple (St. Mark ix. 38-41).

something else, namely, that there are good men, men in whom dwells something of the spirit of Christ, who for one reason or another are outside the Christian fold. Nor, lastly, can that fellowship be identified as a definite body of individuals; for all of us yield to the Spirit fitfully. The fellowship is not, therefore, a tangible entity. Yet it is the salt of the earth, the leaven which must finally leaven the whole lump, the true Body of Christ.

It should seek to solidify itself. Our duty as members of it is to yield ourselves more wholly to the Spirit; to bear with one another; to seek to arrive at mutual understanding and a sense of our common aims; to neutralize differences of opinion and inherited prejudices by facing them fairly and assessing their true significance, neither minimizing them nor magnifying them; and above all to avoid schism in the Body of Christ and to work together for the better world which God is striving to create.

It is needful that organized Christianity should remember that it has no meaning or justification except insofar as it promotes this fellowship and furthers the Kingdom of God; that a church which seeks its own advancement, even in the mistaken belief that its advancement is identical with the advancement of the Kingdom, is doomed sooner or later. Any institution, but particularly the Church, if it is to flourish, must lose itself in its mission and exhibit the spirit of its Lord, who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."[16]

[16]St. Mark x. 45.

History bears out the teaching of the gospel that the unfruitful tree never in the long run escapes the Divine Woodman; that no institution, however venerable, which ceases to fulfil its function can very long survive.

Yet we must recognize that the Catholic conception of the Church, which is the conception which we must read into the Old Roman Symbol—and certainly into the Apostles' Creed—has value so far as it goes. Organization, so long as it keeps its aim in view, is a powerful force. Only through organization can the Church effectively perpetuate itself and influence the world. Also the conservative aspect of Catholicism is essentially sound. There has been a continuity of practical Christian faith throughout the centuries, just as there has been a continuity of valid working hypotheses in other fields. The Church has received from her past certain convictions which experience has shown can be deviated from only with peril. These convictions constitute what may well be termed a Standard of Faith, which it is the duty of the Church to study to adhere to. We may question whether institutional continuity, guaranteed by episcopal succession or what not, is essential to the preservation of the Faith. Institutions like men tend to stiffen with age and to cease to be responsive to the needs of a changing world. It seems to be a law of history that old institutions must eventually be replaced by new.

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

Somehow, we find it hard to imagine that ten thousand years from now priests who are legal successors of the priests of the present generation will still be celebrating Mass at Gothic altars in alb and chasuble, although we have no doubt that Christianity and a Church will still survive. Yet institutional continuity, provided that it does not lead to legitimist pretensions, has great and varied uses and can seldom be broken without loss.

Such are some of the respects in which the Old Roman Symbol failed to register the whole round of the vision which the Church caught from its Master in its golden youth. The wonder is, after all, that it conserves so much, that its picture of the primitive gospel is as complete and accurate as it is. When we use the Apostles' Creed for devotional purposes, it is easy to supply these deficiencies by reading into its primitive phrases their primitive meaning. The Symbol, however, displays one deficiency which it is much harder to ignore. Literally interpreted, it expressly distinguishes both Christ and the Holy Spirit from God, and apparently dates Christ's origin from his human birth. It neglects the thought of the indwelling Christ; it refers to Christ simply as our external Lord and Judge. In a word, it ignores the Christologies of St. Paul and St. John, and the main trend of the Christian thought of its own age. The main crux in the interpretation of the Symbol is to account for so undeveloped a Christology in what is so clearly a second-century document.

Two alternatives present themselves: One is to

adhere to the sound maxim that a document must be interpreted by itself, that it must be regarded as meaning exactly what its language naturally implies. On this basis we shall have to hold that the Symbol represents Christ as a purely human figure, the Son of God only in the sense that he was begotten through the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly the thought of Jesus as a man commissioned to be the Messiah was the earliest of all Christologies; and if this interpretation be correct, the Symbol is seeking to revive the original view of Christ—just as it harks back to pre-Pauline Christianity in other respects: in its neglect of the Pauline problem of justification,[17] for example, its rejection of the Pauline idea of a spiritual resurrection body, and (with a single doubtful exception, the word *monogenes*) the entire absence in it of Johannine phrases. A motive for repudiating the teaching of St. Paul and St. John can even be suggested: The Symbol is a Fundamentalist document, whose aim is to exclude Hellenistic ideas from the Church. Now the Pauline and Johannine Christologies are tinctured with Hellenism; and it is a characteristic of Fundamentalism always to regard the Modernist within the fold as an even greater menace than the open enemy outside.

This interpretation of the Symbol, however, is simply incredible. It is impossible to believe that the

[17]This particular omission had an interesting result eventually. It was just because the Apostles' Creed is silent upon the great issue between Protestantism and Catholicism that both Protestants and Catholics in the sixteenth century could agree upon it.

church at Rome, which gloried in St. Paul as one of its founders, would sanction a direct attack upon him. It is impossible to believe, also, that any orthodox body of Christians in the second century would explicitly deny the supernatural character and preëxistence of Christ. As a matter of fact, the First Epistle of Clement, which is an official document of the Roman church itself, quotes with approval the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the supernatural character and preëxistence of Christ are asserted in the most emphatic terms.[18] We are driven, therefore, to seek another interpretation.

In so doing a second maxim of historical science comes to our aid: the rule that a document must be interpreted in the light of its purpose, that omissions in it which can be accounted for in the light of that purpose are to be treated as non-significant. Now the Old Roman Symbol is a formulation of the Standard of Faith; and we have only to define the Standard of Faith somewhat strictly to find the solution of our problem. The purpose of the Standard of Faith was to exclude Hellenistic error. This purpose called for an emphasis upon the genuineness of Christ's humanity. It did not call for an assertion of his preëxistence or superhuman nature; these truths the Hellenists admitted, and indeed were overemphasizing. The fact that the Symbol omits to mention them[19] is therefore no indication that it means to deny

[18]I Clement xxxvi.

[19]Unless, as is more than possible, the words "His only Son" in the Symbol refer to Christ's preëxistent Sonship.

them; the purpose of the Symbol simply did not call for their mention.

That this is the true explanation of the strange feature of the Old Roman Symbol which we are considering is borne out when we compare the Symbol with other references to the Standard of Faith in second-century writers. In Ignatius, for example, we find passages in which the genuine humanity of Christ is asserted quite as exclusively as it is in the Old Roman Symbol;[20] yet elsewhere we find Ignatius teaching Christ's preëxistence and divinity,[21] and even echoing the Logos Christology.[22] Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, with all of whom the Logos Christology is a central conviction, likewise use language reminiscent of, if not actually borrowed from, the Old Roman Symbol.[23] These analogies suggest that in the Symbol itself silence is not to be taken as denial; that its framers were prepared to allow the speculations regarding the spiritual nature of Christ to take their course, all that they demanded being that these speculations must keep within the limits set by the original tradition regarding the perfection of Christ's humanity. The Symbol simply insists that Christ became flesh.

The special features of the Symbol which at first sight seem to indicate an anti-Pauline bias are all capable of other explanations. In fact, they are not

[20]Appendix, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 17, 18.
[21]Appendix, Nos. 1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14.
[22]Appendix, No. 9.
[23]Appendix, *passim*.

peculiar to the Symbol but are characteristic of second-century theology in general. The doctrine of Justification, for example, finds almost as few echoes in the second century as the doctrine of the Atonement, and for the same reason: its basis was Jewish. St. Paul's idea of the resurrection body as a body of spirit was generally disregarded. The second-century Fathers as a whole reverted to the original doctrine of a resurrection of the flesh, and that without consciously rejecting the authority of St. Paul. Thus Ignatius, who declares that even Christ's post-resurrection body was a fleshly body,[24] is at the same time a warm admirer of St. Paul. That the Logos doctrine proper should have left no trace upon the Symbol is also quite explicable. There is reason to think that the Johannine theology did not come to be at home in the West until the second half of the century.[25]

Yet while it would be wrong to regard the Old Roman Symbol as a pronouncement directed against the divinity of Christ, its omission to refer to it undoubtedly constitutes a blemish. It means that the Symbol is neglecting the very truth which the contemporary Church was laboring to assimilate and clarify. Both Tertullian and Irenaeus felt the omission; for in paraphrasing the Symbol they find it

[24]Appendix, No. 18 *ad fin.*

[25]It is not discernible in I Clement or Hermas. The first Western document to clearly state it is Justin's First Apology; and Justin came from the East. For the evidence as to the period at which the Johannine literature became current in the West, see J. Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (New York, 1922), pp. 497f., 577ff., 595f.

necessary to add statements identifying Christ with the Logos.[26] In the long run another Symbol became necessary, and what we call the Nicene Creed supplied the need.

The expression of Christian Faith in terms of the Logos conception was an historical necessity, a Greek-thinking Church had to adjust its faith to Greek thought. Moreover, the Logos conception did the Church a service. It undoubtedly hastened the full recognition of the divinity of Christ, a conception alien to Jewish thought, by providing a formula for it. As applied by St. John it furnished a Christology much more adequate than the earlier Christologies. Yet the Logos conception had its roots in a body of religious ideas which were utterly unchristian; and it took centuries of watchful definition to purge the Christian Logos theology from its pagan associations. Had the purpose of the Old Roman Symbol been to exclude the Logos theology from the Church altogether, we should hardly have the heart to blame its framers when we recall the subsequent history.

For in the first place, the conception of the Logos was associated with an unchristian conception of God as the unknowable, unutterable Absolute, a conception which robbed God of all character, and indeed of any real personality. The introduction of the Logos idea into Christian theology, therefore, tended to obscure "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again, the Logos of Hellenistic philosophy was by definition a being inferior to God; for his very function

[26] Appendix, Nos. 34, 41, 44, 46, 55.

was to serve as a link between the unapproachable God and the impure world. When Arius contended that if Christ be Logos, he must necessarily be inferior to God—a creature of God and not God Himself—he was, it is true, denying the very thing which the Logos doctrine was originally employed to express, namely, that in Christ God Himself entered human life; but after all he was only being true to the real Logos conception. Athanasius, in order to conserve the conviction that Christ was "Very God from Very God," had virtually to abandon the essence of the Logos conception.

Once more, the idea of Christ as the incarnation of the Logos presented many loopholes for error which it took centuries to stop up. In the course of the Gnostic controversies it had been settled that Jesus possessed a true human body; but, in the light of the doctrine of the Incarnation, what of his soul? The simplest conception of the Incarnation, of course, was that the Logos, or Mind, of God took the place of a human soul in Jesus. This, however, from many points of view, failed to satisfy the Christian consciousness. To attempt to summarize the long and intricate discussions which finally resulted in the dogma of the union of two natures and two wills in the person of Christ, and to examine the assumptions and bearings of that discussion, would lead us too far afield. We may point out, however, that the temptation which lies hid in the idea of Jesus as the incarnation of the Logos is hardly overcome even yet. For the Logos in the original sense was God's Thought,

the sum of the ideas which mold all things in the universe. By definition, therefore, it was omniscient. Hence the recognition of Jesus as the incarnate Logos suggested that Jesus was omniscient, an idea which still lingers in many quarters.

Now the view that Jesus was omniscient, we are convinced, is a heresy in the strictest sense. Not merely is it contrary to the evidence of the New Testament and to the spirit of the Church's teaching regarding the genuineness of his human nature; it impairs the Faith. Had Jesus been omniscient, he would not have been "tempted in all points as we are"; it is difficult to see how an omniscient being could be tempted at all. Again, the agony on the cross would have had little poignancy. The true agony, surely, was not the physical pain; rather it was the perplexity expressed in the cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"[27] It was just because he could not *foresee* his triumph, because all that he could see was his apparent failure, that this great cry of faith was wrung from him. For a cry of faith it is. In asking for light as to the purpose[28] of God in thus abandoning him, he showed the unshakeableness of his conviction that God always has a wise purpose in His dealings. It meant that Christ met the supreme trial of mankind, the temptation to disbelieve in God which comes to all of us when confronted with the undeserved

[27]St. Mark xv. 34; St. Matthew xxvii. 46.

[28]It is worth noting that the words for "why" in the original, λαμά, ἱνατί, εἰς τί, all require the translation "for what purpose," and forbid the sense "on account of what." There is no trace of reproach in the cry.

calamities of life; met it and was unshaken by it. Lastly, it is hard to see, if it required an omniscient being to grasp the will of God for man, how we can possibly believe that we, who are not omniscent, can receive his revelation. It is just because a Jew of the first century, with all the necessary limitations of knowledge and outlook which were incident to a first-century Jew, could utter finalities, that we men of the twentieth century, with all our necessary limitations, can dare to have convictions.

Now all these heresies can be traced more or less directly to the acceptance of the Logos theory regarding the nature of Christ; and all of them are explicitly or implicitly guarded against in the Old Roman Symbol, by its emphasis upon God as Himself the creator and ruler of the universe and by its emphasis upon the genuine humanity of Christ. Had its framers been able to foresee the future, they could hardly have drawn the Symbol more wisely. Even the overemphasis upon the humanity of Jesus is almost salutary; for the standing temptation of Christians has always been to elevate their Master above the human level and thus impair His function as our Exemplar; just as the tendency of unbelievers has always been to reject his divinity and his consequent claim upon their allegiance. One of the greatest contributions of historical science in the last half-century has been to make it possible for us to study Jesus in his historical setting and so to understand him better. It is to be hoped that history will do what no ecclesiastical formula has ever succeeded in doing, namely,

prevent us from severing Christ from humanity and force us to dwell upon his character and actual teaching. There is little danger that one who has grasped his character and his teaching and been captured by them will fail (practically, if not in theory) to recognize in him "the power of God and the wisdom of God," in a word, God incarnate.

CHAPTER IX

THE CREED AND SCIENCE

Reasons for the Historic Conflict between Science and the Church—The Conflict between the Church and Astronomy—The Church Fails to Prevent the Acceptance of New Astronomical Ideas—And Her Fears for the Preservation of the Faith Are Falsified by the Event—More Recent Reactions of Science upon Christian Doctrine.

THE most interesting chapter in the history of the Apostles' Creed has never been written: so far as the present writer is aware, even the materials for it have never been fully assembled. It is the chapter which should deal with the history of the interpretation of the Creed, what the Creed has meant to each successive generation in the course of its long history. It will, of course, be largely a history of misinterpretation; for the art of interpreting historical documents historically is of very recent growth. From the combined influences of carelessness, ignorance, and a desire to quote authority for their own convictions, men have constantly read into the Creed meanings of which its authors never dreamed. Yet such misinterpretations have great interest; for they illustrate the development of Christian thought.

We shall not attempt, however, to sketch the history of the interpretation of the Creed. Our purpose in this chapter will be a more limited one: to examine the most common type of error in the interpretation

and use of the Creed. In the last chapter we have seen the value of what we are coming to term Fundamentalism. In this chapter we shall illustrate the fallacy which besets it.

In one respect the Creed is very vulnerable. Its makers necessarily assumed the accepted ideas of their day; and these ideas, like all human conceptions, were bound to pass. In consequence the history of the Creed has been troublous. There has been a more or less constant "warfare of science with theology"; a warfare, be it said, in which the side of the theologian deserves more sympathy than is accorded it, for example, by Dr. A. D. White in the deservedly famous book so entitled.

For science and the Church approach ideas from different points of view. The interest of the scientist is primarily an intellectual interest. He values an idea according as it enables him to correlate the facts of experience. Hence no idea to him is sacrosanct. He is always ready to relegate an idea to the scrap-heap if he can find a better one; and he is ever on the search for a better one. The Church's interest in ideas, on the other hand, is wholly practical. She views ideas as forces, and assesses them according to their effects upon the lives of men; she is only secondarily interested in their rationality. We may perhaps put the difference another way. The Church begins where the scientist leaves off. The aim of the scientist is to evolve ideas. The work of the Church is to take religiously useful ideas and press them home upon men with a view to changing their characters. It is only

natural that the Church should be reluctant to surrender ideas of proved worth, that she should, so to speak, fight to retain her tools. Her intellectual conservatism, therefore, is not the result of innate stupidity, as is sometimes thoughtlessly assumed; it is due to the very nature of her task.

Two reasons in particular account for her conservatism; one doubtless fallacious, the other only too well founded.

In the first place, she is almost driven to claim inerrancy for her teaching; and that for an intelligible reason. A vigorous life cannot be built upon scepticism; it must be inspired by whole-hearted belief. In order that the Church's teaching may be fully effective in men's lives it must be accepted as absolute truth. Now it naturally appears to the Church that to show that any part of her teaching is erroneous is to shake men's confidence in the whole. We shall see that this involves an error, but the idea is surely natural.

Her other reason for dreading changes in ideas which are even remotely connected with religion is better grounded. It may be, as we shall argue in our concluding chapter, that the Christian Faith, like other working hypotheses, is susceptible of reinterpretation in terms of any truth which may be discovered. But reinterpretation takes time; and while it is in progress, the faith of many may be shaken, their religious habits upset, their moral scruples weakened, and irreparable damage done to individual souls. To bring the point very near home: We historians have overthrown the old idea of the literal inspiration of the

Scriptures; and in so doing we have undoubtedly done the Church an ultimate service. But are we sure that in so doing we have not contributed, temporarily at least, to the decline in Bible reading, despite the fact that the application of the historical method has made the reading of the Bible potentially more inspiring than ever before? Has the ultimate gain not been purchased by some momentary loss? It is to be remembered, further, that the ultimate gain which may accrue from a translation of Christian Doctrine from its current formulation to a formulation more in accord with new knowledge is not always easy to foresee. Indeed, it is often by no means clear, when a new scientific idea first emerges, that the Faith can ever be adjusted to it. Can we blame the Church, then, if she resents a scientific discovery which threatens to shake the religious foundations of men's lives, and if she tends to regard the discoverer as heartless, or even as a criminal? Nay, may we not expect that the opposition of the Church to revolutionary ideas will be in some degree proportionate to her devotion to her proper work?

The proper attitude of the Church toward scientific advance may best be determined by studying a concrete example. We shall choose for that purpose a conflict between the Church and science which is now over and done with, that we may be able to discuss it in a spirit of detachment and speak of its outcome with confidence: the long conflict between the Church and astronomy.

The Creed, as we saw in the second chapter, as-

sumes the old Babylonian notion of the universe, as consisting of a flat earth overarched by seven heavenly domes, with water above the firmament and water beneath the earth, Sheol or Hades being within the earth.[1] When Christianity penetrated to the upper strata of Greco-Roman society, it came into contact with another notion; for Greek astronomy had long before arrived at the conception of the earth and of the heavens as spheres.

From the fourth to the ninth centuries, a fierce war was waged by Christian theologians upon Greek astronomy. It followed more or less the course described in a famous Oxford epigram. The theologians sought to demonstrate that the Greek conception was "not true"; that it was "contrary to Scripture"; and finally the wisest of them arrived at the conclusion that it "did not signify." Basil of Caesarea declared,

> It is a matter of no interest to us whether the earth is a sphere or a cylinder or a disk or concave in the middle like a fan.[2]

The details of this ancient Fundamentalist controversy we must not linger over. Slowly, even before the Dark Ages were ended, the more scientific view made headway. The Venerable Bede, for example, admitted the sphericity of the earth and of the heavens; and by the ninth century practically all Christian scholars had come around to this view.

With the recovery of the scientific works of Aris-

[1] See the figure on p. 40.

[2] *Hexaemeron,* Homily ix., as quoted by White, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. 92.

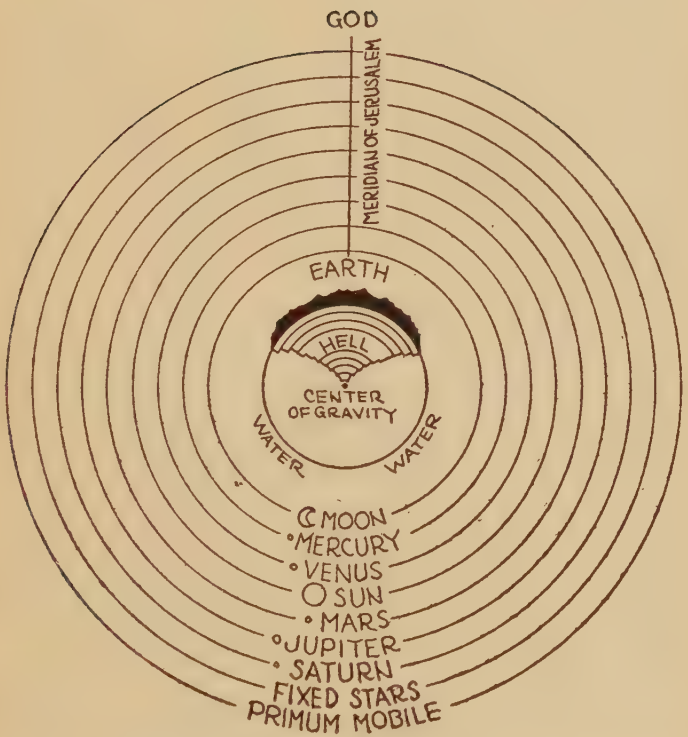


FIGURE II.—THE UNIVERSE ACCORDING TO THE MEDIEVAL ARISTOTELIANS

totle in the thirteenth century, the Greek view came even more fully into its own. After a brief struggle in the beginning of the century, Aristotle came to dominate the Arts curriculum of the universities, and theologians set themselves diligently to work to harmonize theology with the Aristotelian science. It may seem strange to think of Thomas Aquinas as a Modernist, but such he really was; and through the labors of Thomas Aquinas and his confrères the essentials of Greek astronomy were incorporated into theology.

After all, the process of harmonization was not difficult, as the reader will see if he examines the accompanying figure. It will be observed that, as far as the teaching of the Creed was concerned, the new conception offered no real embarrassment. As the throne of God was placed at the zenith above Jerusalem, and hell was still placed within the earth, no change in the traditional conception of the Ascension and Descent into Hell was involved—save that Hell was now interpreted as meaning the place of the damned instead of the place of all departed spirits. For this misconception of the meaning of the Creed, however, astronomy was not responsible. Again, inasmuch as the antipodes were represented as uninhabited, the possibility of Christ's being seen by all men at his second coming was likewise saved. It required only that the Church should agree to interpret as popular expressions the scriptural references which seemed to imply a flat earth, to establish peace between theology and astronomy; and men soon began

to think of this astronomical system almost as part of their Christian faith. In Dante the whole range of medieval theology is fitted into it.

The system of Aristotle, however, had not constituted the last word of Greek science upon astronomy. In the centuries after Aristotle, the Museum at Alexandria, the Carnegie Institution of the ancient world, conducted systematic observations of the sun moon and stars, and also carried mathematics to a much higher point than ever before. Euclid, whose *Elements of Geometry* was the bugbear of many of us in our boyhood, was an Alexandrian mathematician of this period. The result was, in the first place, the accumulation of a mass of data which, added to the Babylonian data, furnished a solid basis for plotting the movements of the heavenly bodies; and secondly, a geometry which provided a means of describing them.

It was discovered, for example, on comparing ancient descriptions of the heavens with more recent observations, that the equinoxes, i.e., the points among the stars apparently occupied by the sun on the days in spring and fall when day and night are equal, must be very slowly changing—the phenomenon known in astronomy as the *precession of the equinoxes.* This suggested that in addition to its diurnal revolution the sphere of the fixed stars was revolving around the earth also in another direction.[8]

[8]It was in order to account for the precession of the equinoxes that the Arab followers of Aristotle added a ninth sphere to the traditional eight (see figure on p. 249). According to Aristotle the sphere

Again, the Alexandrian observers found that the planets at times seem to have a retrograde motion; which proved that they could not be attached to the spheres themselves, for the spheres must be assumed to have a continuous motion. To account for this aberration, it came to be held that, instead of being attached to their spheres, they revolved on orbits whose centers revolved on the surfaces of the spheres (*epicycles*). This led to the abandonment of the idea of the planetary spheres as solid realities,[4] and to regarding them as simply imaginary mathematical figures.

Nor was this the end of the Alexandrian refinements. It was found that even the hypothesis of epicycles could not account for all the phenomena. It was necessary to assume in certain cases, in the case of the moon for example, that the circle on which the epicycle moved (the *deferent*) was *eccentric,* i. e., that it had for its center not the earth but an imaginary point revolving about the earth; and even in some cases

of the fixed stars was the source of the motion of all the others, the slower motion of the inner spheres being due to their slipping. But if the sphere of the fixed stars were the source of the movement of the other spheres, obviously they would move exactly in the same direction as that of the sphere which moved them, and a precession of the equinoxes would be impossible. In order to account for the precession it was necessary to posit another *primum mobile*; which of course must lie outside of the sphere of the fixed stars, inasmuch as it imparts to the latter its diurnal motion. The precession was then accounted for by allowing the sphere of the fixed stars a slight movement of its own.

[4]Ptolemy still continued to think of the sphere of the fixed stars as real and to regard the earth as at the center of it.

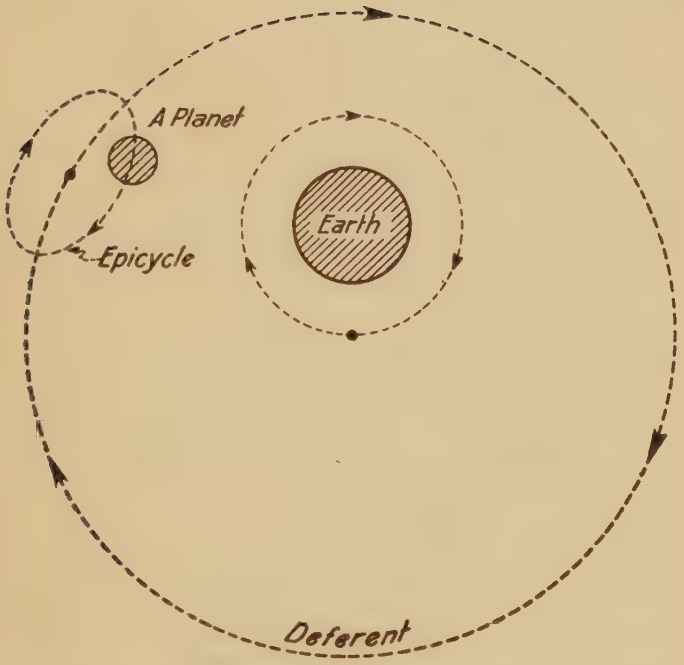


FIGURE III.—AN ECCENTRIC DEFERENT AND AN INCLINED EPICYCLE

that the plane of the epicycle was inclined to the plane of the deferent at an angle. (See Figure 3.)

The great work in which the labors of these astronomers culminated was the *Syntaxis* (better known as by its Arabic name, the *Almagest*) of Ptolemy, written about 140 A.D. The *Almagest* became known in Europe in the twelfth century, in the form of a Latin translation of an Arabic version. The original Greek was published in the end of the fifteenth century. The Renaissance humanists naturally studied Ptolemy with enthusiasm, as they did all things Greek; and a controversy arose in learned circles between the adherents of the older Aristotelian system, with its real spheres, and the purely mathematical system of the Ptolemaists. The humanists on the whole favored the latter, but the theologians very generally defended the former as the more Christian. Then in the sixteenth century both systems were shattered. The teaching of the "Christian" astronomers that the antipodes were uninhabited, a fact which the humanists were already doubting, was finally disproved by the voyage of Magellan; and Copernicus put both systems on the defensive by arguing that it is the earth which revolves —the sun and the fixed stars stand still.

Niklas Koppernigk (or, as he himself chose to Latinize his name, Nicolaus Copernicus) was a Polish scholar, the nephew of the prince bishop of Ermeland, a canonist and physician by profession but with a genius for mathematics. It is not quite clear just when or how he conceived the idea that the phenomena which led the Ptolemaists to frame their exceedingly

complicated theory of deferents, epicycles, and inclined orbits could be more easily explained by assuming that the earth revolves both about its axis and around the sun. It is possible that it was suggested to him by the discovery that some of the ancients themselves had advanced such a notion. In any case, when in 1505 at the close of his student days in Italy he took up his residence at his uncle's palace at Heilsberg, he began to develop the idea. On his uncle's death in 1512 he retired to the canonry which his uncle had procured for him at the cathedral at Frauenberg, and set himself laboriously to recalculate all the available data regarding the movements of the heavenly bodies (together with the results of certain observations which he made himself) with a view to discovering how far they would fit the new hypothesis. The result was his great work (by far the most exhaustive work upon astronomy since that of Ptolemy), *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium*. It was practically complete by 1530 but was not published until 1543, the first copy reaching Copernicus on the very day of his death.

The theory of Copernicus, we may remark, was not quite the Copernican theory as now understood. Not merely did Copernicus, like Ptolemy, retain the idea of an outer sphere of the fixed stars and apply himself solely to the discussion of the solar system, but he retained also the old conception of the orbits of the planets as circular. In consequence, although he was able to dispense very largely with epicycles and eccentrics, he was not able to do without them altogether. It remained for Kepler in his *Astronomia*

nova (published in 1609) to do away with the necessity for epicycles and eccentric circles altogether by showing that the orbits of the earth and of the planets are elliptical; and for Newton in his *Principia* (published in 1687) to show why they must be so, by establishing the theory of universal gravitation.

Before we study the condemnation of the Copernican theory by the Church, it will be well to note the havoc it was bound to make in the current theology. In the first place it was plainly contrary to Scripture; for the Scriptures assume the earth is fixed. Of course the Ptolemaic theory was likewise contrary to Scripture, for Scripture implies in many places that the earth is flat; but these passages were by now explained away and men were accustomed to disregard them. More serious still was the objection that the new theory left no place for God in the universe. It was no longer possible to think of Him as enthroned at the zenith above Jerusalem, for if the earth revolves on its axis there is no fixed zenith. For the same reason it seemed necessary to abandon the doctrines of the Ascension and Second Coming. Indeed the effects of the new theory upon Christian faith had an even larger aspect. If the earth was but one of the planets, it seemed impossible to think that God could have sent His Only Son to redeem its inhabitants. The embarrassments with which the Copernican astronomy threatened the Christian Faith were really serious.

It is interesting to note that it was the Protestants who first took alarm. Pope Clement VII, like the true Medici that he was, on hearing a verbal report

of the new theory in 1533, instead of being shocked by it, was very much interested. In 1536 the Cardinal Archbishop of Capua, probably at the Pope's instigation, wrote to Copernicus requesting a copy of his book and offering to pay the expense of having both the book and the tables on which it was based transcribed. Luther's reception of Copernicus' ideas was very different:

> The fool wants to overturn the whole science of astronomy; but, as the Holy Scriptures state, Joshua bade the sun stand still, not the earth.

In 1541, two years before Copernicus' book was published, gentle Melanchthon wrote to a friend that such intellectual license as that of Copernicus ought to be suppressed by wise rulers. (Lutheranism, we may remember, assigns to the civil ruler the function of suppressing heresy, which in Catholicism is exercised by the Inquisition.) Calvin, in his commentary on Genesis, published not long after the *De revolutionibus,* scornfully remarks,

> Who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?

It was, to be sure, a Protestant professor from Wittenberg, George Joachim Rheticus, who became Copernicus' first enthusiastic disciple and induced him to publish the *De revolutionibus*; and it was a Protestant theologian, Osiander, who saw the book through the press. But Osiander showed his apprehensions regarding its reaction on theology by adding to the book a preface explaining that the purpose was not to over-

throw the accepted astronomy, but only to provide a simpler method of forecasting the movements of the heavenly bodies.

As a matter of fact, little notice was taken of the Copernican theory by the Church of Rome for more than half a century. It was not until that stormy petrel of philosophy, Filippo Bruno, wandered about Europe preaching not merely Copernicanism but a cosmology which went beyond Copernicus (namely, that the universe contained an infinite number of worlds) that the Church took alarm. If Copernicanism seemed to render it inconceivable that God had sent His Only Son to earth, Bruno's system seemed to render the inconceivability (literally) infinite. Bruno was burned at Rome in 1600, and his writings placed on the Index of Prohibited Books. Even so, Copernicanism proper remained uncondemned until 1616.

The reasons for this apparent supineness are not hard to guess. In the first place, Copernicanism at first made way but slowly. Scholars in the sixteenth century were not so ready to abandon old ideas as they are today. In science no less than in theology, authority was mighty, and the new theory struck most men as a wild paradox. Again, in the preface of Osiander, which was long regarded as Copernicus' own, it was expressly stated that the new theory was not to be understood as representing objective truth. Finally, it should ever be remembered, so long as a dangerous view remains confined to the narrow circle of the learned, it hardly attracts the Church's interest.

It is only when it threatens to spread among her children at large and to shake the faith of masses of men that she becomes alarmed. Galileo's offense, after all, was not that as an astronomer he held the Copernican theory; it was that by his telescopic discoveries and by the vigor and clearness of his exposition he was demonstrating the truth of the theory to the public.

The story of Galileo's treatment by the Church is illuminating. Galileo's personal history we have not the space to tell; and besides it has been told often and interestingly. He was recognized as the foremost mathematician of his day in Italy. Like the few other first-rate mathematicians of the time, he early became convinced of the truth of the Copernican theory, although he was slow at first to proclaim his faith. Indeed, in his astronomical lectures he continued to teach the Ptolemaic theory for many years after he had discarded it in his own thinking. His motive seems to have been, however, rather the fear of arousing criticism from his professional colleagues than any dread of ecclesiastical censure. Galileo had good reason to know the conservatism of the ordinary learned man of the time. Early in his career he had disproved the Aristotelian doctrine that heavy bodies fall more quickly than light ones by dropping a heavy and a light body simultaneously from the top of the leaning tower of Pisa, and showing that they reached the ground at the same instant. But the professors at Pisa far from welcomed the demonstration. Instead they denounced his presumption in differing from

Aristotle and continued to prefer the dictum of the Master above the evidence of their own senses. Such being the spirit of the scientists of the time, it is not surprising to learn that there early arose a feud between the Aristotelians and Galileo; a feud which, it should be said, Galileo's sarcastic tongue did little to sweeten.

His first open attack upon the Aristotelian astronomy was occasioned by the appearance of a new star in 1604; a phenomenon which, as he took occasion to point out, was inconsistent with the Aristotelian dogma of the unchangeableness of the heavens. But it was the telescope (which he really invented independently in 1609, although the suggestion of such an instrument came to him from Holland) that put within his reach the main data on which he was to rely in arguing for the Copernican hypothesis. With its aid he discovered in the course of 1609 and 1610 the mountains on the moon, stars in the milky way, the four satellites of Jupiter, what he took to be the tripartite character of Saturn (Saturn's ring was not discerned till later), the phases of Venus, and finally the spots on the sun. All of these discoveries tended to discredit the accepted astronomy; and many of them, Galileo proceeded to show, supported the Copernican theory. Jupiter and its satellites, for example, were a visible illustration of the Copernican idea of the solar system; and the movement of the sun spots not only revealed the unsuspected fact that the sun was revolving on its axis, but certain aberrations in their movements could best be explained by supposing that the earth was re-

volving around the sun on an orbit whose plane was inclined to the plane of the sun's equator. *Galileo was demonstrating that the Copernican theory was more than a mathematical hypothesis; that it was physically true.* Moreover, *he was making the Copernican theory a matter of general discussion.* For Galileo possessed that most dangerous gift, a literary style; and he was beginning to abandon Latin and clothe his arguments in Italian.

It was not the princes of the Church, however, that first took alarm. In 1611 Galileo was invited to Rome, and cardinals and dignitaries crowded around him in the Vatican gardens to look through his wonderful glass and listen to his theories. A commission of the Sacred College reported that his discoveries were genuine. He was elected a member of the Lincean Academy, then as now one of the greatest distinctions to which an Italian scholar can aspire. Theological, as opposed to merely scientific, opposition was first mooted by a layman—or perhaps it was by a laywoman.

It seems to have been at the table of the Grand Duke of Tuscany that the question first was raised (seemingly by the Grand Duchess herself) whether Galileo's theories were not in conflict with the Christian Faith. The discussion was reported to Galileo, and Galileo proceeded to publish a letter to the Grand Duchess arguing that the Copernican theory was not necessarily excluded by Scripture. This put the theological issue squarely before the public; and what today we should describe as Fundamentalist at-

tacks upon Galileo became frequent. The lead was taken, naturally enough, by members of the Dominican Order, an order which from its very beginning had felt itself commissioned to act as the champion of orthodox theology. Finally in 1615 the attention of the Inquisition was formally, though as the custom was secretly, called to Galileo by one of his Dominican opponents.

In December of that year Galileo journeyed to Rome, believing that he had only to explain his position in order to convince the authorities of its entire orthodoxy. Unfortunately, like many another in his situation, he was too optimistic. On February 26, 1616 he was summoned by Cardinal Bellarmin, himself a most distinguished scholar, and informed that a commission of theologians appointed by the Holy Office had made the following report two days before:

> To assert that the sun is in the center of the universe and never changes its position is a proposition inconceivable and false from the scientific point of view; and is also formally heretical, inasmuch as it is expressly contrary to Holy Scripture. To assert that the earth is not the center of the universe and motionless, but that it has a daily motion, is also a proposition inconceivable and false from the scientific point of view, and is at the least an error in faith.

By order of the Holy Office, therefore, Bellarmin enjoined Galileo hereafter not to "hold, teach, or defend" such a doctrine. The interview was private, and the tone of the cardinal was most friendly.

Galileo promised to obey. Indeed throughout the

whole story Galileo displays an unwillingness to come into conflict with ecclesiastical authority. Whether this was due to a certain lack of heroism in his nature, such as sometimes characterizes men of pure intellect, or whether it was due to a genuine desire to remain in communion with the Church, it is difficult to say. The latter explanation is supported by the fact that he asked for and obtained from Bellarmin a certificate of orthodoxy.

For some fifteen years Galileo kept his promise and remained undisturbed. By that time, however, the impression of Bellarmin's admonition had grown somewhat faint. Moreover, a pope had come to the throne who not only was a warm friend of Galileo but who was credibly reported to Galileo as having expressed in conversation his disapproval of the prohibitory decree. Galileo yielded to temptation and broke his pledge. In 1632 appeared his brilliant *Dialogue upon the Two Chief Theories of the Universe.* In it Galileo took the the precaution to leave the question formally undecided; but he made the exponent of the Aristotelian position ridiculous (he even gave him the name Simplicio) and there could be no doubt in the reader's mind as to which side had the better of the debate. The book was written in the vernacular.

The result is a familiar tale. Despite his sixty-nine years and the fact that he was seriously ill, Galileo was summoned to Rome in the dead of winter and arraigned before the Inquisition. He was treated, however, with gentleness. He was not kept in prison but

was allowed to lodge with the Tuscan ambassador. He was *not* tortured, although, as the law required, he was formally threatened with torture. He recanted publicly; and his sentence was simply that of confinement during the pleasure of the Holy Office, a sentence which was soon commuted to that of confinement to his own house under surveillance, coupled with a prohibition to receive visitors. The fact that Milton visited him would seem to show that this latter part of his sentence was not always strictly enforced. He lived until 1642, and despite the blindness which eventually befell him, he continued to publish scientific dissertations without interference from the Church to the very last. Indeed, what from the purely scientific point of view is his greatest work, his *Dialogue on the New Science*, was written in this period.

As we review the case of Galileo, what strikes us is the mildness with which he was treated. In few of her conflicts with science has the Church come out with such honor. She cannot be convicted of lack of interest in science. Indeed, it might even be said that the dignitaries of the Church of Rome displayed an interest in science which, at the beginning at any rate, made them almost forget the interests of religion. To the discredit (or the credit?) of Protestantism be it said, it was Protestantism which first sensed the theological implications of the Copernican theory. It is only when the laity and the professional theologians call upon the cardinals to act that they act at all; and their action throughout is marked by the utmost consideration for Galileo. They content themselves at

first with a private warning. Galileo is told to go on with his scientific researches and publish what he please; he is only made to promise to avoid the one dangerous topic. Bellarmin even furnishes him with a certificate of orthodoxy to safeguard his reputation. It is only when Galileo violates his pledge of silence that he is summoned before the Inquisition. Even then, as the foremost scholar of the time, he is treated with distinction; and in effect all the Inquisition does is to take steps to ensure that he keep silence for the future. If we disregard the piece of pettiness which forbade the inscription of an epitaph on Galileo's tombstone, it must be said that officially the Church did the very least she could do, if we admit her premises; and her course met with the full approval of the Protestant theologians of the time.

Yet the outcome shows that her premises were false. In the first place, time has shown in this case, as in so many others, the futility of attempting to prevent scientific advance by persecution. Facts and logic will be served. Within a quarter of a century the Church found herself on the defensive. In 1651 the Jesuit, Father Riccioli, published a monumental work, the *Almagestum novum,* with the express purpose (as stated in the preface) of providing "an *apologia* for the Sacred College of Cardinals who officially pronounced these condemnations." The Copernican theory steadily won its way. Ere long even Catholic astronomers were teaching the Copernican theory under the subterfuge that, while it could not be accepted as true in view of the official condem-

nation of the Church, it supplied a more convenient formula for calculating the movements of the heavenly bodies. In 1757, at the instigation apparently of a Jesuit astronomer, the general prohibition of books teaching Copernicanism was removed from the Index, although the specific prohibition of the use of the uncorrected edition of Copernicus and of the works of Galileo and Kepler[5] continued to appear in the Index until 1835. Then the Church admitted defeat by dropping these prohibitions also; and she has been busily engaged in trying to explain her condemnation of Copernicanism ever since. Truth survived the Church's efforts to suppress it.

But the really important thing to notice is that the Faith also survived. The fears of the theologians have been shown to be groundless. The sole effect of the new astronomy has been to make it forever impossible for us to think of God and Christ as enthroned in the heavens miles above us; and that is a gain. For pre-Copernican theology contained an implicit contradiction. On the one hand, it thought of God as located at a definite point in space; on the other, the religious consciousness required that He be

[5]On March 5, 1616, the Congregation of the Index issued a decree citing the pronouncement of the theologians quoted on p. 262 (with the omission, however, of the word "heretical"), and ordering the work of Copernicus withdrawn from circulation until it should be corrected. Four years later a statement as to the corrections demanded was issued. They amounted only to nine changes in phraseology, designed to bring the text into harmony with the Osiander preface by removing the impression that the book advocated the new theory as a fact. No edition embodying these corrections, however, was ever published. Galileo's astronomical works and later those of Kepler were also put on the Index.

thought of as omnipresent. Copernicanism has not only driven us to a grander conception of the universe, and in consequence to a loftier conception of the Creator; but by preventing us from thinking of God as confined to any one location in space, it has forced us to see Him everywhere and has led to a more awful and more inspiring sense of His presence with us.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet,
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet.

Meantime, not one of the values of the older conception have been sacrificed by the change. We can still believe that the universe is animated by a just and benevolent Will—it is no harder to believe that now than it ever was, and it is still as necessary. The conceptions of the Resurrection, of the Ascension, and of the Return of Christ to judgment, to be sure, have lost their picturesque concreteness; we have been forced to a humbler estimate of our comprehension of the life beyond the grave. But we must still believe that, where God is, there Christ is. We still believe, also, with perhaps even a clearer conviction than that of our forefathers, that men and institutions must meet Christ's standards; for it is becoming very evident that unless men learn to live as Christ taught them the world will fall to pieces. The vital elements in the faith of the Church still survive.

But the Copernican astronomy is not the only scientific discovery of the last four hundred years which has troubled those who would believe in the

Creed. Many other ideas which the Creed took for granted have been swept away by advancing knowledge. The makers of the Creed took for granted, for instance, that the world was made in one act. Geology and biology have taught us that the world is the outcome of an evolution, that creation has been a process rather than an act, and that it is still going on. The Creed embodies the primitive Christian expectation of a sudden return of Christ. Historical study, however, has deepened our understanding of the processes of social change and made it almost impossible to believe that the regeneration of the world will be accomplished by a cataclysm from without. Rather, we are inclined to expect, the regeneration will be gradual; our disposition is to emphasize that side of our Lord's teaching which declares that the Kingdom of Heaven is already among us and that it is to grow as a mustard seed. We can no longer entertain the conception of the Holy Spirit which the framers of the Creed undoubtedly held, for psychology has long since dispelled the crude anthropology on which that conception was based. We no longer think of spirit as a substance, or of the Prophets as unconscious mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit. We no longer regard the main function of the Prophets as that of foretelling future events; the modern historian regards them primarily as preachers whose words were addressed to their contemporaries. As a result the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture practiced in the age of the Old Roman Symbol, and all ideas based upon it, are now utterly discredited. The Creed

seems, at least, to teach that the flesh in which one dies will be reassembled to form the resurrection body. This idea was certainly prevalent in the early Church and led to the abandonment by the early Christians of the practice of cremating the dead; modern physiology, however, has made it inconceivable. Finally, it looks very much as if scientific history is going to force us to abandon our inherited notion regarding the manner of Jesus' birth. These are but illustrations of the profound revolution in our religious conceptions which time has wrought. It has been asserted that there is not a single phrase in the Creed to which an intelligent man of today attaches its original connotation. This is scarcely an exaggeration.

Every step in this intellectual advance has been resisted by the Church; and in every instance in which the story can be said to be closed, the outcome has been the same; the Church has been defeated but has survived. We venture to believe that in the cases in which the outcome is not yet evident, in the case of the new psychology for instance, the result will ultimately be the same. The Church will be forced to accept new ideas, but these new ideas will be not only truer, but in all probability spiritually more effective than those which they supplant. That any growth in human knowledge will suffice to demonstrate scientifically the truth of the convictions by which the Christian life is inspired may well be doubted; but what those convictions really are and the necessity for them will be made clearer at each step in the progress of thought.

CHAPTER X

THE AUTHORITY OF CREEDS

The Traditional View—The Objections to It from the Point of View of Modern Thought—And from the Point of View of Modern Religion—Both Types of Objection Assume that Creeds Impose Unwarrantable Restrictions upon the Advance of Thought—But Science Itself Is as Dogmatic as the Church in Its Assertion of Facts—Though It Is Agnostic as to the Truth of All Theories—Why Theories Are Necessarily Transitory—A Fact Is a Prediction Which Serves as a Trustworthy Working Hypothesis—Trustworthy Working Hypotheses Survive as Permanent Possessions of the Race—Although Their Conceptual Dress Is Subject to Constant Change—Religious Dogmas Are Neither Facts nor Theories but Form a Separate Category—The Implications of This (1) As to Their Method of Proof, (2) As to the Nature of Their Survival, (3) As to the Authority of Creeds, (4) As to the Interpretation of Creeds—The Task of Theology—Shall the Apostles' Creed be Dropped from Use?

THE inerrancy of the Apostles' Creed has been maintained by all branches of Western Christianity, with the exception of the Unitarian, until recent times. The official standards of the Presbyterian and Methodist communions, for example, no less than those of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran communions, still assert the traditional view. That view in its completeness may thus be defined: Every statement in the Apostles' Creed is absolutely true. Any scientific, historical, or philosophical doctrine which contradicts any statement of the Creed cannot possibly be true, for the teachings of the Creed are a divine revelation. It may confidently be expected that as

knowledge grows such doctrines will be superseded by others more in consonance with the Creed, but in any case it behooves us to hold to the teaching of God rather than to the teaching of man. The acceptance of the Christian Faith is essential to our welfare both in this world and in the next. No man can be saved without it. Disbelief is fatal. To promote disbelief is to imperil immortal souls. Heresy, in other words, is both spiritual suicide and spiritual murder, and should be suppressed.

This more or less is the attitude of any church toward its doctrinal standards, but it is an attitude which in the modern world awakens instant protest. To the superficially "up-to-date" it is simply absurd, something which it is inconceivable that any intelligent man should any longer entertain—"a relic of medieval barbarism." To the more serious-minded, the orthodox attitude toward the Creeds appears not merely irrational but pernicious, the quintessence and the root of that which the scientist finds most reprehensible in the Church: its obscurantism, its persistent opposition to advancing knowledge. Science can never forget her martyrs—the long line of distinguished thinkers who have been persecuted by the Church, from Abelard to the last American professor who has been driven from his chair by the machinations of the Fundamentalists. The story of these persecutions has been told by Andrew D. White in his *Warfare of Science with Theology*. It is a painful story. One rises from its perusal with a sense of wonderment, less at the cruelty than at the stupidity of the Church, at

its incapacity to learn from a consistent record of defeat the folly of opposing the onward march of reason.

The fact is that the theory of the divine origin of the teaching of the creeds seems in utter conflict with all the presuppositions of the modern mind, as well as with the findings of history. We moderns are possessed by the idea of historical evolution. Our habit is to regard every event as the necessary outcome of what has gone before. The idea of a supernatural intervention in the evolutionary process arouses our repugnance. We are unwilling to admit such interference even in the case of the most venerable of the creeds; nor do we feel it necessary to do so. The origin of most of the historic creeds of Christendom can be adequately ascertained. For the most part the steps in the great arguments in the course of which they were beaten out can be rather minutely traced. Nowhere does the historian find it necessary to posit an interference with the normal thought processes of men in order to explain the outcome. The history of the Apostles' Creed, indeed, is in many important particulars obscure; but nothing prevents our assuming that it likewise was the product of human minds and hearts. We are disposed, therefore, to regard any creed as registering simply a stage in the advancement of human thought, a stage which must some day be overpassed, if indeed it has not been surpassed already. It would appear, therefore, that adherence to ancient creeds is neither justifiable nor possible. Thought should and must progress.

Modern religion, in the person of many of its best

representatives, is no less opposed to recognizing the authority of the creeds than is modern thought. It is pointed out that it is a false reverence which bids us shackle ourselves to the religion of the past. The Holy Spirit has not ceased to operate. God still speaks to men. It is our duty to listen to God rather than to tradition; to welcome the new light with which He is flooding our intellects, not to resist the coming of His new revelations or to try to limit our spiritual insight to that attained by our ancestors. It is pointed out, further, that traditionalism is the foe, not merely of science, but of vital faith. For try as he may, no man can think the thoughts of his fathers sincerely. A man's convictions must be his own, they must be *his* reaction to life and fact, if they are really to move him. A man can live confidently only by ideas which he fully shares and of which he has himself felt the force.

Nevertheless, practically all churches make the acceptance of some doctrinal position a requirement for admission to the ministry, if not to church membership. It is hardly conceivable that a practice so widespread should have no intelligible basis. To attempt to analyze the basis of credal subscription, however, one must be prepared to face a series of rather intricate logical problems.

The fact is that the principle of credal subscription is usually misunderstood, even by its advocates. Too often it is interpreted as a limitation upon freedom of thought. Against such a use of creeds the protests voiced by such intellectual leaders as Dr. White and

such religious leaders as Dr. Fosdick are entirely valid. Alas, there is only too much occasion for them! But properly understood, the authority of the creeds is entirely consonant with the principle of the freedom of thought, *as science applies that principle.*

For science is at least as dogmatic as the Church. In what does the dogmatism of the Church consist?

1. The Church teaches certain dogmas, i.e., certain "definitely stated and authoritatively expressed doctrines," certain "definite, established, and authoritative tenets."[1]

2. These dogmas the Church regards as final truths for which all scientific and philosophic systems must find place.

3. The denial of dogmas once established by the consensus of universal Christendom the Church regards as the height of presumption, and as just cause of excommunication, at least in the case of a clergyman.

4. Adherence to the Christian Faith is a matter of the highest practical importance. One must sincerely and vitally believe the Faith if he is to live well.

5. The spreading of unbelief, therefore, is criminal and should be restrained—in extreme cases by the civil authority.

All these characteristic features of the Church's attitude toward its dogmas (even the last-named feature) are closely paralleled in the attitude which the scientific world assumes toward what it regards as established facts.

[1]Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary* (1900), *s.v.* Dogma.

1. For a "scientific fact" is only a dogma under another name—something which the whole scientific world, after full examination and discussion, has come to agree upon. There is, to be sure, an important difference between a scientific fact and a religious dogma. That difference will engage our attention in a moment, but for the present we are concerned with the essential similarity.

2. Facts are the building stones out of which all scientific theories are constructed. A theory which can be shown to be inconsistent with a single established fact science instantly rejects.

3. The layman is expected to accept the facts of science on the authority of the scientific world. As for the professed scientist, woe betide him if he be convicted of the slightest disregard for fact. He at once finds himself denied recognition as a scientist. Science has its excommunications no less than the Church!

4. Woe betide, also, the man who fails to take account of facts in the conduct of his affairs. The whole vast advance in the art of living which marks the modern world is due almost entirely to an eager search for facts. The modern prescription for success is to do things "scientifically."

5. The scientific world regards the acceptance of scientific truth as so vital that on occasion science turns persecutor. In the Panama Canal Zone, for instance, anyone who should spread disbelief in the accepted view regarding the causes of yellow fever, and thus encourage neglect of the recognized preventive measures, would undoubtedly find himself restrained

by the authorities. In the matter of religious belief the scientist admits, indeed he usually insists, that liberty of conscience is proper; but it is hard to find a physician who does not regard the conscience clause in the British Vaccination Act as an absurdity.

The scientific and the ecclesiastical attitudes, therefore, are not so far apart as is sometimes thought. Indeed, the dogmatism of science in the present day is if anything more extreme than that of the Church. Suppose that Christians were to hold the teachings of their Master with a tithe of the conviction with which the scientific world holds that the sun never rises in the west, what a different world this would be!

Whence, then, is the idea that science is above all things open-minded? The answer is that the dogmatism of science is accompanied by an utter agnosticism. Science is dogmatic in regard to its facts, but is inclined to be entirely agnostic as to the objective truth of its theories.

And with reason. Ideally a theory should fulfil three conditions: (1) It should cover and interpret every fact which can ever be brought under it. (2) It should be logically coherent. (3) It should be in harmony with all other correct theories—with the correct conception of the world as a whole and with the correct conception of everything in the world. That any of our present theories perfectly fulfils any one of these conditions is in the highest degree unlikely. A perfect theory, indeed, could be framed only by an omniscient being. Yet these conditions are exigent, and

as a result the course of scientific advance has been strewn with cast-off conceptions.

To illustrate: (1) A theory is always liable to be disproved by the discovery of new facts. An excellent illustration is to be found in the case of the theory of matter universally held by chemists and physicists in the eighth decade of the last century. The ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (published between 1876 and 1878) could positively assert, as the accepted view of the whole scientific world, that all matter is made up of atoms of some sixty-four distinct varieties, and that these atoms are indivisible, immutable, and indestructible. It was believed that no atom since the creation of the world had ever been transmuted into an atom of another variety, or ever could be. Each and every atom that exists, it was held, has existed since the beginning of things and will continue to exist unchanged until the end of time.[2]

Now this theory is still capable of explaining at least ninety-nine per cent of all known facts of physics and chemistry. But since 1880 a few, a very few, facts regarding the vacuum tube and radioactive substances have been observed which the atomic theory of the '70's is unable to explain. Hence it is now as universally discarded as it was once universally accepted, and a whole new conception of the ultimate constitution of matter has been constructed to replace it.

The fate of the Atomic Theory taught a salutary

[2] *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 9th ed., arts. "Atom," "Chemistry," "Molecule."

lesson. There was some disposition in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to confuse scientific theories with scientific facts, and to attribute to the one the certainty which pertains only to the other. Lord Balfour, for instance, in one of his earlier books, was betrayed into the statement that the main outlines of the structure of the physical universe were now satisfactorily made out, and that all that was needed was to fill in the details of the picture. The overthrow of the Atomic Theory shook this easy confidence. The discovery of radioactivity had come as a complete surprise. Who could guarantee that Nature did not have in store other unexpected facts on which other of our accepted theories might some day be shipwrecked?

(2) The discovery of a failure in logic in a widely accepted theory is harder to find. Scientists are logicians by profession, and a theory has to run the gauntlet of logical criticism from its very birth. Yet the most widely talked-of scientific development of the last decade seems to be a case in point. Einstein's Theory of Relativity may have been suggested by the Michelson experiment, but its ability to explain the results of that experiment and a few other barely discernible facts is the least element of its strength. The cogency of Einstein's theory, so at least the present writer (the veriest layman in such matters) is given to understand, lies in its logic. Einstein is said to have shown that the Newtonian Theory is logically faulty, that it involves assumptions which are not necessary, indeed are inadmissible; whereas Einstein's own theory correlates the facts in a more perfect manner.

Once again, the scientist well may ask, if the genius of a Newton could be caught by a fallacy and if that fallacy could remain undetected for centuries, what thinker and what system can be regarded as inerrant?

(3) Finally, one theory, apparently faultless in itself, may be involved in the downfall of another; for no conception liveth to itself and no conception dieth to itself. The biologist assumes the results of the chemist, and the historian the results of the psychologist. Consequently a revolution in chemistry may result in a revolution in biology, and a psychological discovery may necessitate the rewriting of a portion of history. For all our conceptions—such is the constitution of the human mind—tend to arrange themselves in a harmony.

One whole science which long greatly occupied men's thoughts has vanished from the list of sciences for no other reasón than that the assumptions on which it was based are no longer entertained. The life of early man was beset by vast anxiety. Because of his ignorance of the laws of nature, he was far less aware than we of the forces and factors on which his welfare depended. Consequently he was ever on the watch, and suspected everything he saw of being in some way or other a thing to be propitiated. In early Babylonia his attention became directed to the stars. Perhaps, nay surely, these bright beings were determining elements in his fortunes. Not having yet evolved the (after all) somewhat abstract and negative concept of inanimate matter, he assumed that the stars were beings like himself, only mightier. In other words,

they must be gods. This idea took such firm possession of the early Babylonians that already some centuries before Hammurapi (*c.* 2100 B.C.) all of their gods had become identified with one or other of the heavenly bodies. The observation of the heavens consequently became in their eyes a matter of the greatest practical importance. By watching the gods it should be possible to detect their humor at any given moment and thus avoid directing petitions to them at unpropitious times. The Babylonian temples thus became transformed into observatories, and inasmuch as these temples were served by corps of professional priests with leisure for systematic observation and facilities for preserving the results of observation, a great and complicated science of astral divination was gradually built up.

For, after all, astrology was essentially a science. It is true that it was based on assumptions which we now know to be false. But all sciences consciously or unconsciously posit certain assumptions; and granting its assumptions, the task which astrology set itself was a rational task. So far as we can see, moreover, it proceeded in large part along lines which we recognize as scientific; it made great use of observation and induction.

From Babylonia, after some fifteen hundred years of development, astrology passed to Greece and Rome; and from Rome it descended to the Middle Ages. It was still a reputable science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Then, more or less suddenly, in the eighteenth century it was relegated by intelligent men

to the limbo of superstitions; and it is interesting to see why. We hear of no proper investigation of its doctrines. No one, so far as we know, took the trouble to make a large collection of horoscopes, compare each with the fate of the person for whom it was cast, and tabulate the results with a view to ascertaining whether the predictions were or were not fulfilled in the majority of instances. Astrology fell into disfavor because the thoughts of men had changed. The new astronomy was teaching that the stars were not personal beings but huge masses of matter far removed in space. It seemed absurd to believe that these remote, dead things should be the determining factors in the fates of men, particularly in view of the fact that a profounder study of human nature was suggesting other and more intimate sources of human destiny. Men were coming to think with Cassius,

> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

The downfall of astrology is perhaps the most picturesque example of a set of theories dragged to earth by the overthrow of other theories, but other and more recent instances abound in the history of thought. The effect of the discovery of radioactivity upon Lord Kelvin's calculations as to the age of the solar system will occur at once to the scientific reader.

There are, therefore, three good reasons for distrusting the finality of any theory; and so keenly is the modern scientist sensible of the fallibility of all theories that he is disposed to question the objective

truth of any and every one of them. There is, indeed, a tendency among present-day scientists to define a theory as simply "a convenient means of describing, systematizing, and thinking about the complicated facts" with which science has to deal.[3]

Now the common objection to regarding the Christian Faith as final and authoritative rests upon the assumption that its tenets are a set of theories. In effect the Church is charged with insisting on theories with a dogmatism which is permissible only in the case of facts. This, however, is to overlook the nature of the Christian Faith. The teachings of Christianity are to be classed, strictly, neither with scientific facts nor with scientific theories. Religious convictions form a category by themselves. In order to understand their nature, it will be necessary to examine the nature of scientific facts and of scientific theories somewhat more closely.

Why do we regard the facts of science as objective truths, and wherein precisely lies the distinction between a fact and a theory?

A scientific fact can always be stated in the form of a verifiable prediction. For instance, we regard as a fact of science the statement that water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen in the proportions of two to one. What we really know, however, is that water when decomposed will always produce these two substances only, and in that proportion; and that, conversely, hydrogen and oxygen when mixed in these

[3]Cox, *Beyond the Atom,* Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature (Cambridge, Eng., 1914), p. 7.

proportions under proper conditions will always unite to form water. What hydrogen and oxygen are no one fully understands; but we know enough about them to recognize them. The nature of the union between them which we call water is a deep mystery, as to which science is still speculating; but we know water when we see it. The familiar chemical equation $2H+O=H_2O$ is therefore essentially a prediction, and one which is entirely verifiable. The relation which it expresses is not a creation of our fancy; it has been revealed to us in repeated, *given* experiences. Hence it must embody something objective.

The distinction between a fact and a theory is intimately related to the distinction between man's contemplative and man's practical interests.

Ever since the days of Thales, men have thirsted to understand the nature of the world in which they live. It is a noble passion, but for the reasons which we have set forth, an unsatisfiable one. As contemplative beings, we are doomed, to quote the author of the Second Epistle to Timothy, to be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." But when we turn from the quest of an accurate and all-inclusive view of the world to the task of living in it, we find solid ground beneath our feet. The laws or predictions of practical science prove entirely reliable guides in the conduct of our affairs. A grain of seed is perhaps the most mysterious thing in all nature; but the farmer knows the difference between a grain of wheat and a grain of barley, and he knows also that if he sows the one he will not reap the

other. The facts of science, in other words, may be regarded as working hypotheses.[4]

Now theories pass, but a working hypothesis, once its reliability is established, becomes a permanent acquisition of the race. No change in our habits of thought can destroy it. On the contrary, human thinking must forever find place for it, for it is based upon external and unchangeable fact. Nevertheless the phrasing of a working hypothesis, the form in which it is conceived, will change with the passage of the years and the growth of knowledge.

Some five or ten thousand years ago a long-forgotten Babylonian must have stood on the banks of the Euphrates and reasoned with himself thus: "Father Euphrates is journeying to the great water. He is a kindly god and blesses with fertility the land through which he passes. Go to! I will make him a path through my fields and perhaps he will bless them." He tried the experiment and it proved successful. The principle of the irrigating ditch was discovered, and it has remained a permanent possession of civilized man ever since.

But the element of permanence in the discovery made by the first irrigator was obviously not his *idea* of it, the manner in which he represented his discovery to himself. Irrigation was discovered while human thinking was still in the animistic stage. The

[4]The philosophically trained reader will note that we are here taking liberties with an established phrase. We are using the term "working hypothesis" in the sense of "rule of art" or "guide for conduct," not in the sense which John Stuart Mill and other logicians employ it, viz., "a theory to be tested by further investigation."

first irrigator undoubtedly regarded the Euphrates more or less as a person such as himself. But modern irrigating engineers do not regard rivers as persons. As a matter of fact, the principle governing the construction of irrigating ditches has been phrased in many different ways in the course of history: (1) It was originally phrased in terms of animism. (2) When animism passed away, it was doubtless phrased in the formula "water runs down hill." (3) This was later seen to be a particular case of the law that "water seeks its level." (4) This in turn was recognized to be the result of a general law of terrestrial gravitation. (5) In the seventeenth century Newton evolved a conception of universal gravitation. (6) This is at present in process of restatement at the hands of Einstein and others. All these conceptions are quite distinct from one another. The one bond which unites them is their identity of value when used as working hypotheses by the irrigator. Considered as a conception solely, the best of them is far remote from the truth; but he who builds his ditch by any one of them is acting in accord with reality.

We may note, however, that for convenience we often content ourselves with outworn expressions of scientific facts. We still in ordinary life speak of the sun's "rising," although for centuries we have known that it is not the sun which rises but the earth which revolves. Practical chemists still speak of atoms and use the chemical formulas of 1870 in their computations, although they well know that the term "atom"

is a misnomer and that the exact truth is far more complicated than the old chemical formulas indicate.

To turn now to the sphere of religion. To which category does Christian doctrine belong—to the realm of theory or to the realm of fact? The answer is, as we have said, to neither; although it bears analogy to both. On the one hand, Christianity is nothing if not practical; it is clearly a body of working hypotheses. Christian Doctrine may be defined as the "postulates of the Christian life," the convictions on which that life is based and by which it is inspired. As regards *function,* therefore, the teachings of religion are analogous to the working hypotheses of science. Yet they differ from the working hypotheses of science in that they are not statements of observed fact. They are convictions as to the meaning of human life and its goal, the nature and possibilities of man and the nature and purposes of the Reality which underlies the facts of observation. All the essential doctrines of the Faith are of this character. Even the historical portions of the creeds are only apparent exceptions; they veil assertions as to the unseen and eternal. As to its *content*, the affiliation of Christian doctrine is with the theories of philosophy.

The peculiar nature of Christian doctrine determines its method of proof, the nature of its indestructibility, its authority, and the mode of its definition.

We may as well face the fact that religious dogma is inherently incapable of proof or disproof by any of the recognized methods of scientific investigation.

In the matters with which religion deals, the inductive method, the characteristic method of science in the narrower sense of the term, is powerless. Induction implies observation, and in matters of religion verifiable observation is impossible. Take for instance what is perhaps the most fundamental of all Christian convictions: "We know," says St. Paul, "that all things work together for good to them that love God." How could St. Paul "know" this in any scientific sense? How could he be sure, for example, that his various shipwrecks had redounded only to his good in so far as his love to God was perfect? How can anyone be sure that he understands all the bearings and effects of anything that happens to him? Indeed, is it not just because we realize that we *cannot* determine exhaustively the ultimate results of anything that we are able to cling to the faith which St. Paul expresses? There are too many familiar facts of life which point the other way.

Nor can any vital Christian conviction be demonstrated by historical methods. The Church has always regarded a belief in Jesus' resurrection as vital; and quite rightly. But the so-called historical proofs of that event involve a *petitio principii*. It is true that the evidence proves overwhelmingly that the disciples believed that they saw Jesus again after his death. But our belief as to whether they actually saw him or were victims of an hallucination will depend upon our a priori views as to the possibility of a resurrection from the dead. For the major premise of all historical investigation is that the impossible never hap-

pened. No amount of evidence will convince the experienced historical investigator that what he regards as a scientific impossibility ever occurred; he knows too well the fallibility of human testimony. The evidence for Jesus' resurrection, therefore, will appeal only to those who already on other grounds are prepared to be convinced.

The fact is that science and history are precluded both by the nature of their materials and by the nature of their tasks from considering the ultimate problems of religion. The materials of both are limited to tangible human experiences. The function of science is to trace the uniform sequences and correlations of such experiences. The function of the historian is to determine what we should have experienced had we been present at a given time or place and to study the interrelations of past events. In a word, it is the province of the historian and of the scientist to study and describe what may be called the visible surface of reality; they do not penetrate to the depths beneath. History as history and science as science know neither God nor a divine purpose.

To illustrate once more from the so-called historical proofs of the resurrection of Christ. All that history as history can possibly establish is that the disciples had visions of the risen Christ and of his ascent into the sky. For history rests upon testimony; and that exhausts the disciples' testimony, for it exhausts their observation. It is far, however, from exhausting the doctrine of the Resurrection, as the Church has held it. The really vital elements in that

doctrine are to be found in the inferences which the disciples drew from their experiences: that Jesus went to God, that he still lives with God and in communion with his followers, and that he is to come again and complete his work of salvation. The disciples believed these things, but they could not testify to them. "We testify that we have seen," but "no man hath seen God at any time." We too may believe them, but we cannot rest our belief upon historical proof.

To penetrate intellectually to the unseen and eternal realities, and to decipher the significance of life and of the universe, is the task, not of history or of the sciences of observation, but of philosophy. Yet philosophy also fails us. Her task is too high for her powers. The effort of philosophy is to gather together all our experiences and the established results of science into a single system, and thus to arrive at a consistent conception of reality as a whole. That task is too great for man as yet. Philosophy has, to be sure, a function even now. It is inevitable and right that we should take stock from time to time of our knowledge and attempt to unify it. But it is equally inevitable that the systems which we form should be imperfect, and therefore transitory. Philosophy cannot hope to arrive at results which can be taken as assured and unshakable. The nature of the universe and the meaning of human life are problems too vast and too complicated for the pure reason to solve.

But the necessities of life demand a present answer; and, it should be added, an answer so simply phrased

that all can understand it. For we find ourselves in a world which we have not made, and at the mercy of a system of things which we cannot control. We cannot be content without some sort of working hypothesis as to the meaning of our being here and as to the attitude of the system toward us. Consciously or unconsciously, everyone has views upon these ultimate issues; and the views which he holds profoundly influence his life. Everyone, in other words, has a religion, and his religion is the deepest thing in him.

Now the value of the Christian Religion as a working hypothesis for life has been demonstrated amply by experiment. It has been shown in millions of instances that those who unfeignedly hold the Christian Faith and live by it become uniformly better and happier men. In these days of worldwide anxiety and distress, it is becoming clearer than ever before that the only fundamental cure for the evils either of the individual or of society is to be found in the spread of the Christian spirit. Herein lies the proof of which we have been in search. The proof of Christian Doctrine, like the proof of any other working hypothesis, is that it works.

This, to be sure, is not proof as science understands proof. The working hypotheses of Christianity are of a different order from the working hypotheses of science. They are not a set of verifiable predictions; they do not enable us to forecast external events which can be unerringly recognized when they occur. Their value lies in the fact that they satisfy the longings of our human nature and support it in its struggles toward

a better life. It will be objected that a belief which is subjectively satisfying need not be objectively true, that it is quite possible that truth is far other than man would wish it to be. From the abstract point of view that is conceivable, but both heart and common sense revolt against the suggestion. Surely it is unthinkable that the meaning and purposes of our existence should be other than what we must conceive them to be if we are to realize our highest possibilities. Surely the necessary postulates of noble living must represent actual realities, for we cannot believe that noble living is a mistake. This, it must be admitted, is not scientific logic; but perhaps the logic of science implies a similar assumption. At least, we ask the reader to ponder this question: We instinctively assume that the universe is a rational order. Is it not equally justifiable to assume that it is a moral order, that it is a system as much adjusted to the demands of human character as it is to the demands of the human intellect?

Such, in any case, is the assumption upon which religious faith proceeds, although the believer may not always be conscious of it. In the last analysis, we fancy, all religious conviction arises out of a sense of the value of belief. The preachers of a religion may place historical, scientific, or philosophic arguments in the foreground, but their real appeal is always to the life needs of their hearers. The efficacy of intellectual argument in matters of religion is mainly to be found in the fact that it quiets intellectual protests and enables those who are inclined to believe to follow

their inclination. A Christian Science lecturer, for example, may make much of Mrs. Eddy's philosophical system; but few are converted by the philosophical argument alone. People are attracted to Christian Science by the cures, spiritual and physical, which it has achieved; in other words, by the fact that Christian Science "works." This was the real basis of the spread of Christianity itself. The reader may do well in this connection to reread Browning's imaginative reconstruction of a conversion to Christianity in his *Epistle of Karshish,* or, better still, analyze carefully St. Paul's argument for the doctrine of the Resurrection in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The exhortations to righteousness with which St. Paul intersperses the chapter are really part of the argument. For religious belief is profoundly influenced by character. Those that "hunger and thirst after righteousness" will gladly accept convictions which make for righteousness, while the evil man will prefer to believe what will justify him in his evil course.

But the nature of Christian doctrine does more than determine its method of proof; it also accounts for its continuance through nineteen centuries of changing thought. Were Christianity what it is sometimes thoughtlessly assumed to be, a theory of the universe, it would have perished long ago. As a matter of fact, the primitive Christian conception of the universe has perished long ago. There is a wide difference between the religious *ideas* of the most conservative modern Christian and the ideas of the Apostolic Age, though the modern conservative may not always realize it.

The differences between the conceptions of modern and of ancient Christianity are obscured somewhat by the fact that, owing to the inherent conservatism of religion, ancient forms of speech have been preserved. In prayer and hymn and sermon, scriptural language is preferred to modern speech; and ancient formulas such as the creeds are still employed. But it requires but little historical study to reveal that these ancient phrases are used in new senses and with connotations entirely different from the original ones. As a matter of fact, the Christian working hypotheses, no less than scientific working hypotheses, have been assimilated in each successive age to the thought of the day. The true continuity of the Christian Faith has been a continuity of usefulness. The practical postulates underlying the Christian life of today are essentially the same as those which underlay the life of the Primitive Church.

There is little likelihood that these postulates will ever cease to the effective and necessary. The needs which they meet are needs of our unchanging human nature. We have every reason to believe that the convictions which regenerated unhappy and sinful men in the first century must have their modern counterparts, and that convictions essentially similar will be required by our remotest descendants. There is, therefore, nothing inherently absurd in speaking of the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." A helpful religious conviction is like a helpful working hypothesis in the arts. Once discovered it is discovered once for all. The most sceptical modern "in-

tellectual" would find no objection to speaking of the principle of irrigation as a principle "once for all delivered to the engineer."

Nor is there any inherent absurdity in a Christian's holding that the Christian Faith is a divine revelation. On the contrary, he is logically driven to that position. Christianity may be (in the view of the present writer, at least, it certainly is) a product of historical evolution. But Christianity teaches us to see, behind and beneath the evolutionary process, God and a divine purpose. The straight-thinking Christian of today may hesitate to say with so many of his fathers, "I accept the doctrines of Christianity because they have been revealed to us by God." That after all is to beg the question; for it implies that there is a God, that Christ revealed Him, and that Christ's revelation has been safeguarded from error down to our own day by the Holy Spirit. In other words, it takes for granted the essentials of Christian Doctrine and amounts to proving Christian Doctrine by itself. But he *will* say, not merely, "I accept the Christian Faith because it satisfies my whole being," but also, "I give thanks for the gift of this saving faith to the Giver of all good."

If the foregoing be sound, the authoritative character of the historic creeds is evident. The creeds were not hastily or thoughtlessly composed. Every article in them must be presumed to assert something which their authors found could not be denied without impairing the Christian moral energy or the Christian serenity. In a sense, every article may be regarded as stating the result of experiment, and if the men of

(say) the second century found a given working hypothesis useful and needful, there is every presumption that an essentially similar working hypothesis is equally needed today. The Church, whose function it is to conserve the Christian life, must conserve in every particular the faith on which that life has been shown to rest. She must see to it that every vital element in her inherited creeds is embodied in her modern teaching.

But how are these vital elements to be discerned; in other words, how should the statements of a creed be interpreted? Obviously, as working hypotheses; that is to say, their essence is not to be found in the ideas they contain but in the practical applications of these ideas. This, it seems to us, leads directly to the method of interpretation which we outlined in the first chapter and to which we have tried to adhere throughout our discussion of the Apostles' Creed.

Hitherto in this chapter we have found it convenient to preserve the conventional distinction between theology and science. But it should be pointed out that, if the word science be taken in its broader sense, theology is itself a science. The function of theology is to determine and set forth the faith which men need if they are to realize their noblest possibilities. Its materials, certainly the materials of Christian theology, ought to be mainly historical; for history presents innumerable examples of noble lives. The theologian must study the lives of the saints, and above all the life of our Lord, with a view to determining the convictions by which they were inspired. This is

no light task; for it demands the use of historical method, and in a high degree the use of the historical imagination. On the basis of such studies, the theologian must then endeavor to formulate the convictions upon which the Christian life rests and express them in terms of today and in harmony with the knowledge of today. Both the analysis of saintly character and the determination of its postulates are obviously scientific processes.

Like all sciences theology must progress; for theological conceptions are subject to the same laws of change as conceptions in other fields.

1. Theology, no less than natural science, must bow to newly ascertained facts and reshape its ideas to allow for them. Repeated experience has shown the futility of attempting to ignore or suppress scientific discoveries, and also the folly of the theologian's descending into arenas in which he is not at home and attempting to bolster up, by arguments necessarily *ex parte* and usually fallacious, outworn scientific views. Scientific problems are best left to the specialist to settle, and the injection of religious considerations into their discussion can only impede their settlement.

2. Theology, even more than other sciences, is apt to be infected by faulty logic. It is the glory of the theologian that his interests are not simply intellectual, that he is concerned less with the rationality of ideas than with their effects upon the lives, the emotions, and the conduct of men. But for that very reason his intellectual processes are apt to be hasty; and he needs

constantly to reëxamine his teachings in order to make sure that they are in reality indispensable postulates of the Christian life, and that the ideas he combats in the name of religion are actually incompatible with the maintenance of life at its best. Had the theologians of the past been more careful in this regard, the adjustment of theology to new knowledge and new forms of thought often would have been more promptly accomplished, and the Church would have been saved from much embarrassment and some crimes. A careful scrutiny of the bearing of each Christian dogma upon life, moreover, should enable the theologian, and his pupils the clergy, to keep their teaching in close touch with life and to present it to men in its most appealing form. For in the case of ordinary men and women, the inspiration which an idea affords is at least as likely to win conviction as a discussion of the evidence on which it is based.

3. Theology must of necessity adjust her teachings to changed conceptions in other fields of thought; for it is impossible in the long run to keep our religious thinking and our scientific thinking apart. The principle of consistency cannot permanently be disregarded. The old childlike conception of revelation as an insertion into human minds of certain thoughts of God involves a psychological impossibility. For ideas are not separable units. The ideas of any mind are organically interrelated and presuppose one another. Hence God's conception of the simplest thing, we must suppose, is colored by His omniscience and cannot be grasped by any save an omniscient being. Our con-

ception even of what we reverently believe to be revealed truth cannot therefore be God's conception. It is inevitably colored by the imperfections in our general knowledge. It cannot be static, but must necessarily widen and deepen as "knowledge grows from more to more."

Yet theology, like other practical sciences, possesses certain elements of permanence. She can point to certain dogmas which, while they may need to be rephrased from time to time, nevertheless can be regarded as eternally valid, for they minister to permanent human needs. The realities which we must believe these dogmas to reflect can only remotely be apprehended by the intellect, but in our everyday living we can lay hold upon them. Hence, for the purposes of life, we may be justified at times in shaping our course by outworn conceptions. Far be it from us to connive at intellectual dishonesty. Religious thinking, no less than other forms of thought, must obey the canons of truth-seeking. But provisionally, while the restatement of any dogma is in progress, is it dishonest to rely for practical purposes upon a conception which our fathers found a sure guide to strength and peace? We may recognize its imperfections from an intellectual standpoint, but may we not rest assured that its practical applications will still be found to be valid when the process of restatement is complete? If so, may we not for purposes of practical inspiration let our minds dwell upon ancient formulas, such as the Apostles' Creed, if only to remind ourselves of our fellowship with the past? Despite our Copernicanism we

still say "the sun rises." Is it any more dishonest to repeat the phrase "He ascended into the heavens"?

Shall the ancient creeds, and in particular the Apostles' Creed, be dropped from all ecclesiastical standards and liturgies in which they still occur? That, so it seems to the present writer, is a question purely of expediency, not of principle. It is not a question which involves the preservation of the Faith; for the Faith is not to be confounded with any particular formulation of it. In some ways a formulation of the Faith in modern terms, could a satisfactory one be drawn up, would present it more intelligibly, and perhaps conserve it more surely, than do the ancient creeds. Yet it cannot be said that considerations of intellectual honesty demand the discarding of the historic creeds. The Church must demand of her teachers that they present the faith of the past in its integrity, and she may well employ as an expedient to that end a demand that all clergymen master and subscribe to the Apostles' Creed in its vital sense. Speaking for himself, the writer has never found his ordination vows in that particular a burden, but rather a just obligation. Nor can any modern formula ever quite take the place of the Apostles' Creed for liturgical use; for no other formula can ever suggest, in the way that the Apostles' Creed does, the continuity of the Faith throughout the ages and the oneness of the Christians of all time.

The question, therefore, is simply a practical one. Is it possible to retain subscription to the Creed without falling into the blunder and the crime of requiring

clergymen to subscribe to the obsolete ideas which the Creed contains and thus violate their intellectual integrity? Is it possible to teach the Creed to children in such a way as to make them feel its inspiration without being distracted by its ancient form? These are questions on which a practical clergyman alone has the right to speak. Time will decide the fate of the Creed aright. But the hearts of some of us yearn for its retention; for its recitation brings us into contact with the faith of Christianity's Golden Age.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX OF SOURCE MATERIALS

The reader may welcome the following collection of translated source material illustrating the evolution of the Standard of Faith and of the Old Roman Symbol. It makes no pretention to completeness; its main purpose is to elucidate the exposition given in the text. For a fuller collection of materials for the study of the evolution of the Old Roman Symbol and of the Apostles' Creed the reader should consult A. Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche,* 3d ed. (Breslau, 1897), and particularly the valuable appendix by Harnack which that indispensible book contains. Some additional materials may be found in Kattenbusch, *Das apostolische Symbol*; see the index to Vol. II.

I. THE IDEA OF A STANDARD OF FAITH is discernible in the New Testament in Romans vi. 17; I Corinthians xv. 1ff.; I Timothy iv. 6, vi. 3, 12, 20; II Timothy i. 13, iv. 3; II Peter iii. 2; II John 9ff.; Jude 3, 20. In the second-century Fathers the idea occurs frequently, though the precise terms used to express it vary greatly: the "teaching" (διδαχή, διδασκαλία, *doctrina*) of Christ or of the Apostles, the "commandment" (ἐντολή) of Christ or of the Apostles, the "faith" (πίστις, *fides*), the "tradition" (παράδοσις, *traditio*), the "truth" (ἀλήθεια, *veritas*), the "preaching" (κήρυγμα) of the Apostles, the "word" (λόγος), the "formula of allegiance" (*sacramentum, cf.* No. 56 below), the "standard" (κανών, *regula*) of faith, of truth, of tradition, etc. See the references given by Harnack, *op. cit.,* pp. 366ff. The variation of terminology, especially in the earlier writers, suggests that they are not referring to a single, authoritative formula, but rather to the existence of a general body of doctrine received by the Church from the Apostles.

II. NEW TESTAMENT SUMMARIES of the gospel

or of the Standard of Faith may be found in Acts ii. 14-36, iii. 12-26, iv. 8-12, 24-31, v. 30-32, viii. 5, 12, 35, xviii. 28, xx. 25, xxiv. 14f., 24, xxvi. 2-23, xxviii. 20, 23, 31; Romans i. 1-6, viii. 33ff., x. 9; I Corinthians ii. 2, vi. 14, viii. 6, xv. 1-8; II Corinthians iv. 10, 14, v. 10, 18f.; Galatians i. 4; Ephesians i. 3-ii. 22; II Thessalonians i. 7-10; I Timothy iii. 16, vi. 13-16; II Timothy ii. 8-13, iv. 1; Titus i. 1-3, ii. 13f., iii. 4-7; Hebrews i. 1-4, ii. 9, vi. 1-3, ix. 26-28; I Peter i. 3-12, 17-21, iii. 18-22, I John ii. 22, iv. 1-6, 9-17, v. 1, 5-7, 11; Jude 21. As the reader consults these passages, he should ask himself whether the writers could have known any authoritative summary of the gospel such as the Old Roman Symbol.

III. IGNATIUS, Bishop of Antioch in Syria, was transported to Rome to suffer martyrdom in the arena sometime between 110 and 115 A. D. On the way thither he wrote six letters to various churches in Asia Minor, and one to the church at Rome. The translation of the extracts from Ignatius and Polycarp which follows is essentially that of Professor Kirsopp Lake as printed in his edition of the *Apostolic Fathers* in the Loeb Classics, with however a few changes. The reader will note that, while Ignatius clearly believes in the preëxistence and divinity of Christ, he especially insists upon his entire humanity in the manner of the Old Roman Symbol. Various extracts remind us strongly of the second section of the Symbol, but the facts cited to prove Jesus' genuine humanity are more numerous than those cited in the Symbol; for they include his Davidic descent, his baptism, his eating and drinking, and a reference to Herod the Tetrarch as well as Pilate in dating his death. The impression one gets is that Ignatius chooses his proofs of Jesus' humanity unconstrained by the knowledge of an authoritative statement such as the Symbol; that, on the contrary the Symbol is a codification of such arguments as those of Ignatius. Ignatius also makes clear the objective of such arguments, viz., that they are directed against the Hellenists.

1. *Ephesians vii. 2.* There is one Physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and yet not born, who is God in man, true

life in death, both [born] of Mary and [born] of God, first passible and then impassible, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. *Ibid. xviii. 2.* For our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived by Mary according to the dispensation of God, [being born] both of the seed of David and of [the] Holy Spirit. He was born, and was baptized, that by himself submitting [*sc.* to baptism; or perhaps we should translate, "by his passion"] he might purify the water.

3. *Ibid. xix. 1.* The virginity of Mary and her giving birth were hidden from the Prince of this world, as was also the death of the Lord.

4. *Ibid. xx.* If Jesus Christ permit me through your prayers, and if it be his will, in the second book which I propose to write to you, I will show you concerning dispensation of the new man Jesus Christ, . . . his faith and his love, his passion and his resurrection; especially if . . . you all join in the common meeting, . . . in one faith and in Jesus Christ, who was of the family of David according to the flesh, the Son of Man and the Son of God.

5. *Magnesians i. 2.* [I] pray that in [the churches] there may be a union with the flesh and spirit of Jesus Christ, who is our everlasting life.

6. *Ibid. v. 2.* The believers bear the stamp of God the Father in love through Jesus Christ, and unless we are willing to die unto his passion, his life is not in us.

7. *Ibid. vi. 1.* Jesus Christ, who was from eternity with the Father and was made manifest at the end of time.

8. *Ibid. vii. 2.* Hasten all to come together . . . to one Jesus Christ, who came forth from the one Father, and is with One, and departed to One.

9. *Ibid. viii. 2.* There is one God, who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Word proceeding from silence, who in all respects was well pleasing to him that sent him.

10. *Ibid. xi.* Be convinced of the birth and passion and resurrection which took place at the time of the procuratorship

of Pontius Pilate; for these things were truly and certainly done by Jesus Christ, our hope, from which God grant that none of you be turned aside.

11. *Ibid. xii.* You have Jesus Christ within yourselves.

12. *Trallians ix.* Be deaf, therefore, when anyone speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the family of David, [the son] of Mary, who was truly born, both ate and drank, was truly prosecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth; who was also truly raised from the dead, when his Father raised him up, as in the same manner his Father shall raise up in Christ Jesus us who believe in him, without whom we have no true life. *x.* But if, as some affirm who are atheists—that is unbelievers—his passion was only a semblance (but it is they who are merely a semblance), why am I a prisoner?

13. *Romans, superscription.* Ignatius . . . to her who has obtained mercy in the greatness of the Most High Father, and of Jesus Christ his only μόνος Son; to the church beloved and enlightened by the will of Him who has willed all things which are, according to the love of Jesus Christ, our God. . . .

14. *Ibid. iii. 3.* Nothing visible is good, for our God, Jesus Christ, being now with the Father, is the more plainly visible.

15. *Philadelphians, superscription.* Ignatius . . . to the church of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ which is in Philadelphia . . . which . . . is established in the harmony of God and rejoices in the passion of our Lord without doubting, and is fully assured in all mercy in his resurrection.

16. *Ibid. iii. 3.* If any man walk in strange doctrine, he has no part in the Passion.

17. *Ibid. viii. 2.* But to me the charters are Jesus Christ, the inviolable charter is his cross and death and resurrection and the faith which is through him.

18. *Smyrnaeans i.* I give glory to Jesus Christ, the God who has thus given you wisdom; for I have observed that you are established in immovable faith . . . being fully persuaded, as

touching our Lord, that he is in truth of the family of David according to the flesh, God's Son by the will and power of God, truly born of a Virgin, baptized by John that "all righteousness might be fulfilled by him," truly nailed [to a tree] in the flesh for our sakes under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch (and of its fruit are we, from his divinely blessed passion) that he might set up an ensign for all ages through his resurrection for his saints and believers, whether among the Jews or among the heathen, in one body of his Church. *ii.* For he suffered all these things for us that we might attain salvation; and he truly suffered, even as he also truly raised himself, not, as some unbelievers say, that his passion was merely in semblance. . . . *iii.* For I know and believe that he was in the flesh even after the Resurrection. When he came to Peter and his companions, he said to them: "Take, handle me, and see that I am not a phantom without a body." . . . And after his resurrection he ate and drank with them, as a being of flesh, although he was united in spirit to the Father.

19. *Ibid. xii. 2.* I salute . . . you . . . in the name of Jesus Christ, and in his flesh and blood, by his passion and resurrection both of flesh and spirit, in union with God and with you.

IV. POLYCARP, Bishop of Smyrna for the better part of half a century, was martyred in 155 A. D. His only surviving writing is a letter which he wrote to the church at Philippi enclosing letters of Ignatius. When this letter was written, the news of Ignatius' fate had not yet reached Smyrna.

20. *Philippians ii. 1.* Wherefore girding up your loins serve God in fear and truth, putting aside empty vanity and vulgar error, believing on Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave him glory and a throne on His right hand, to whom are subject all things in heaven and earth, whom all breath serves, who is coming as the judge of the living and of the dead, whose blood God will require from those who disobey him. *2.* Now he who raised him from the dead will also raise us up if we do his will and walk in his commandments and love the things which he loved, refraining from all unrighteous-

ness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; rendering not evil for evil or railing for railing or blow for blow or curse for curse, *3.* but remembering what the Lord taught when he said, "Judge not that ye be not judged, forgive and it shall be forgiven unto you, be merciful that ye may obtain mercy, with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again," and "Blessed are the poor and they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God."

21. *Ibid. vii. 1.* For everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an anti-Christ; and whosoever does not confess the testimony regarding the Cross is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord for his own lusts, and says that there is neither resurrection nor judgment, this man is born of Satan.

V. JUSTIN MARTYR was born of Greek parents at Shechem in Palestine about 100 A. D. After a career as a professional philosopher, he became converted to Christianity, and then pursued his career as a wandering philosopher, taking Christianity as his system. His surviving writings are his so-called *First Apology,* written at Rome, apparently about the middle of the century; its appendix, the so-called *Second Apology*; and his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew,* written later, probably at Ephesus. He was martyred at Rome, apparently about 165 A. D. The reader will note in many of the passages cited below phrases which will remind him of the Old Roman Symbol; but he should ask himself whether Justin is quoting the Symbol or whether he is simply repeating certain facts about Jesus' life which were becoming standardized; in other words, whether these passages only illustrate the growth of a Standard of Faith. The latter view is the more commonly held.

22. *I Apology xii. 7.* That your sacrifices will avail you nothing we are informed by the Word, who after the God who begat him is the most kingly and righteous ruler whom we know. . . . *9.* That all these things should come to pass was foretold, I say, by our teacher, who is the Son and Apostle of

the Father of All and Lord, God; namely, by Jesus Christ, after whom we are named Christians.

23. *Ibid. xiii. 1.* That we are not atheists, seeing that we worship the Maker of all the world . . . what sensible man will not confess? *3.* Our teacher of these things, who was born for this purpose, is Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the time of Tiberius Cæsar. We have learned that he was the Son of the true God Himself, and we hold him in the second place [in our esteem], and the prophetic Spirit in the third—reasonably, as we shall see.

24. *Ibid. xxi. 1.* When we say that the Word, who is the first-begotten of God, Jesus Christ our teacher, was produced without sexual union, and that after he was crucified and died and rose again he went up into heaven, we do not bring forth anything new or different from what you relate regarding sons of Zeus. . . . . *5.* But far be it from any healthy mind to entertain such an idea regarding gods that the Governor and Begetter of all things (who according to them was Zeus) was a parricide and the son of a parricide.

25. *Ibid. xxxi. 7.* In the books of the prophets we find it foretold that Jesus our Christ should come, should be born through a virgin and be made man, should heal every disease and every sickness, should raise the dead, should be hated and denied, should be crucified and die, should be raised up and go up into the heavens, should both be and be called the Son of God, and should send out those who should proclaim these things to every race of men, and that the Gentiles should especially believe on him.

26. *Ibid. xlii. 4.* But the Jesus Christ in whom we believe, after having been crucified and dying, rose again and became a king, going up into heaven; and when his preaching was heralded by the Apostles among all nations, it occasioned great joy among those who look for the immortality which he announced.

27. *Ibid. xlvi. 5.* But why through the power of the Word,

in accordance with the will of the Father and Lord of all, God, he was conceived as a man through a virgin and named Jesus, and having been crucified and having died he rose and went up into heaven, these things an intelligent man will be able to comprehend from what has been said at such length.

28. *Ibid. l. 1.* That having become man for our sakes he submitted to suffer and be dishonored, and that he will come again with glory, hear the prophecies which were uttered in regard to this. . . . 12. After he was crucified and his companions had all abandoned him and denied him, later, when he had risen from the dead and had appeared to them and taught them to pay heed to the prophecies in which all these things were foretold as destined to happen, they saw him go up into heaven and believed.

29. *Dialogue lxiii. 1.* And Trypho said, ". . . It remains to prove that he submitted to become man through the Virgin according to the will of his Father, and to be crucified and to die. Prove also clearly that afterward he rose again and ascended into heaven."

30. *Ibid. lxxvi. 6.* Now we who believe exorcize all demons and evil spirits by our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and they become subject unto us. (*For exorcism in the name of "Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate," see also II Apology vi. 6; Dialogue xxx. 3, xlix. 7; and the next extract.*)

31. *Ibid. lxxxv. 1.* But [*Psalm xxiv.*] can be proved to have reference to . . . none of your kings, but to this our Christ alone, . . . who is the Lord of Hosts by the will of the Father who conferred upon him [this dignity]; who also rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, as the Psalms and other Scriptures made clear when they proclaimed him to be the Lord of Hosts. . . . 2. Every demon is conquered and submits when exorcised in the name of this very Son of God and first-born of all creation, who was born through a virgin and became a suffering man, was crucified under Pontius Pilate by your nation, died and rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven.

32. *Ibid. cxxvi. 1.* But if you knew, Trypho, I said, who he is that is called [*various names by various prophets*], you would not be blaspheming him who is now come and has been born and suffered and has ascended to heaven; who also shall come again, and then your twelve tribes shall mourn. *2.* For if you understood what has been written by the prophets, you would not deny that he is God, the Son of the only, the unbegotten, the unutterable God.

33. *Ibid. cxxxii. 1.* I shall speak of one more [miracle], for it will conduce to your understanding that Jesus, whom we have learned is the Christ the Son of God, was crucified and rose again and ascended into the heavens, and that he will come again to judge absolutely every man since Adam.

VI. IRENAEUS, a native of Asia Minor, was as a youth a disciple of Polycarp in the latter's closing years (martyred 155 A.D.). Migrating to Lyons in Gaul, he became a presbyter in the church of that city. At the time of the persecution of the church at Lyons (177 A. D.), he chanced to be in Rome, having been sent as an envoy of the Gallic churches to the Roman bishop, Eleutherus. Consequently he escaped the fate of his fellow Christians at Lyons and on his return was elected bishop in the place of Pothinus, who had been martyred. He is said, not however upon very good authority, to have died as a martyr himself in 202 A. D. His great work is his book *Against Heresies,* which he composed in the days of Eleutherus (died 189 A.D.). It seems likely that Irenaeus did know a symbol very like the Old Roman Symbol (*cf.* especially Nos. 36, 40, 41, 44), but whether the creed he seems to have in mind was the Roman Symbol or an Asiatic symbol has been much discussed. On the one hand Irenaeus came from Asia Minor, on the other hand he was in close contact with Rome and respected the authority of that church. Some scholars hold that the Old Roman Symbol was copied from an Asiatic symbol.

34. *Against Heresies I. ix. 2.* John preached one God Almighty and one Only-begotten, Christ Jesus, through whom (he says) all things were made; that this [Christ Jesus] was

the Son of God, the only-begotten, the maker of all things, the true light which lighteth every man, the maker of the universe, the one who came unto his own, the one who became flesh and tabernacled among us. . . . *3.* Learn, therefore, ye senseless ones, that Jesus who suffered for us, who tabernacled among us, is himself the Word of God. For if any of the eons [*described by Valentinus*] had become flesh for our salvation, then the Apostle naturally would have referred to this eon; but if the Word of the Father who descended is himself the one who ascended, the only-begotten Son of the only God, who became flesh for men according to the Father's good pleasure, the reference is not to any other, or to an octad, but to the Lord Jesus Christ.

35. *Ibid. I. ix. 4.* He who retains in himself unimpaired the Standard of Truth which he has received at baptism will recognize the names and expressions and parables [*which the Gnostics quote*] from the Scriptures, but will not recognize their blasphemous interpretations of them.

36. *Ibid. I. x. 1.* The Church, though she is scattered over the whole world even to the ends of the earth, carefully preserves this faith which she has received from the Apostles and their disciples: [She believes in] one God, Father, Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in [the] Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations and the coming [*sc.* of Christ] and the birth from a virgin and the passion and the raising from the dead and taking up into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming from heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things, to raise up all flesh of all mankind, in order that to Christ Jesus our Lord and God and Savior and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee may bow of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth and every tongue confess to him, and that he may execute just judgment upon all, sending the spirits of wickedness and the

angels who have transgressed and fallen into apostasy and the ungodly and unrighteous and lawless and blasphemous among men into the eternal fire, and of his grace bestowing life and immortality and eternal glory upon the just and holy who have kept his commandments and abode in his love, whether from the very beginning of their lives or from the time of their repentance [*i.e. from their baptism*].

37. *Ibid. I. xxii. 1.* So long as we cling to the Standard of Truth, i.e., that there is one God Almighty who created and fashioned and made out of nothing all things through his Word, . . . this Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . whatever (the heretics) may say, we easily convict them of deviating from the truth.

38. *Ibid. II. xxxii. 3.* From this fact, that the Lord rose from the dead on the third day and manifested himself to the disciples and in their sight was taken up into heaven, whereas they [*sc.* heretical teachers] die and do not rise or are manifested to any, they are proved to have souls in no way similar to Jesus'.

39. *Ibid. III. i. 2.* All [the evangelists] have handed down to us that there is one God, the Maker of heaven and earth, who was proclaimed by the Law and the Prophets, and one Christ, the Son of God.

40. *Ibid. III. iv. 2.* To this fixed doctrine assent many races of barbarians who believe on Christ, having salvation inscribed not with ink on paper but by the Holy Spirit in their hearts and diligently preserving the ancient tradition. They believe in one God, the Maker of heaven and earth and all things which are in them through Christ Jesus, God's Son, who because of his great love for his creation endured birth from a virgin, thus through himself uniting man to God, suffered under Pontius Pilate, rose and was received in splendor, and is to come in glory as savior of those who are saved and judge of those who are judged.

41. *Ibid. III. xvi. 5.* Therefore the gospel knows no other Son of Man than this who [was born] of Mary, who also suf-

fered, and no Christ who flew away from Jesus before the passion; but this one who was born it knows as Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that this same person having suffered rose again. . . . *6.* [Heretics] are ignorant that His [*sc.* God's] only-begotten Word, who is always present with the human race, became united and mingled with his own creation and was made flesh, and is the very Jesus Christ our Lord who suffered for us and rose for our sakes and is again to come in the glory of the Father to raise all flesh, to manifest salvation and a just judgment to all who have been made subject to him. There is, therefore, as we have shown, one God the Father and one Christ Jesus our Lord.

42. *Ibid. III. xviii. 3.* It is plain therefore [*sc. from I Corinthians xv. 3, 4*] that Paul knew no other Christ than him who suffered and was buried and rose again, who also was born and whom also he describes as a man.

43. *Ibid. IV. ix. 2.* We shall not behold another Father than this whom we now desire to see. . . . Nor do we look for another Christ and Son of God than him who [was born] of Mary the Virgin, who also suffered. . . . Nor do we perceive another Holy Spirit than this which is with us. . . . So perceiving something greater than the temple or than Solomon, namely, the coming of the Son of God, we have learned no other God than the Fashioner and Maker of all things, who was shown to us in the beginning; nor any other Christ the Son of God except him who was foretold by the prophets.

44. *Ibid. IV. xxxiii. 7.* [A true Christian] wholly believes in one God Almighty, of whom are all things, and in the Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom are all things, and in the dispensations concerning him whereby the Son of God became man, and in the Spirit of God who enables us to recognize the truth and who brings to view the dispensations of the Father and the Son in each generation among men as the Father wills.

45. *Ibid. V. xx. 1.* But the path of those who belong to the Church circumscribes the whole world, possessing the fixed tra-

dition from the Apostles and giving us to see that the faith of all is one and the same; for all teach one and the same God the Father, and believe in the same dispensation of the incarnation of the Son of God, and know the same gift of the Spirit, and dwell upon the same commandments, and preserve the same ecclesiastical constitution, and look for the same coming of the Lord, and maintain the same salvation of the whole man, that is, a salvation of both the soul and the body.

VII. TERTULLIAN was born at Carthage about 160 A. D. After a career as a lawyer, he was converted about 195 A. D. and was soon made a presbyter. His strenuous views upon Christian morality led him early to sympathize with the Montanist movement. His close association with the Montanists may perhaps be dated about 202 A. D., and his final separation from the Catholic Church about 207 A. D. He was a voluminous writer, the earliest of the Church Fathers to write in Latin, of which he was a master. Tertullian, it will be observed, defines the conception of a Standard of Faith with the utmost precision (46, 48, 51, 55). It is a "law," the Christian's "oath of allegiance," which he takes at baptism (48, 50), the limit within which difference of opinion and development of doctrine and discipline is allowable (46). While it is not identical with any document (No. 46 is clearly not a quotation of a document), yet Tertullian evidently knows that at Rome it had been reduced to an official statement (48), and we may perhaps infer that this Roman statement has been imitated in Africa. In other words, Tertullian knows the Old Roman Symbol. Unfortunately he fails to quote it *in extenso*. No. 51 however may be taken as a quotation of the African symbol, though the third section is obviously abbreviated. Tertullian's references to the present guidance of the Holy Spirit reflect his Montanist trend, and as such should be discounted by the reader.

46. *On the Prescription of Heretics xiii.* The Standard of Faith is this: . . . to believe that there is one God only, none other than the Founder of the universe, who produced all things

from nothing through his Word, who was given forth from him first of all. That Word, who is called his Son, was at various times seen by the patriarchs and taken for God, was at all times heard in the prophets, and finally was deposited by the spirit and power of God in the virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and born of her as Jesus Christ. He thereupon proclaimed a new law and a new promise of the Kingdom of Heaven, worked miracles, was crucified, rose on the third day, was taken up into heaven, took his seat on the right hand of the Father, sent as his substitute the Holy Spirit to guide believers, and is to come with glory to take the holy into the enjoyment of eternal life and the heavenly promises and to judge the unholy to perpetual fire, having brought about a resurrection of each class with a restoration of the flesh. This Standard, which as we shall show was established by Christ, gives rise to no questioning among us except such as produces heresies and heretics. But so long as you retain this formula in its integrity, you may question or discuss what you please. . . . The Faith has been reduced to a definite Standard; it constitutes a law and insures safety to those who observe it as a law.

47. *Ibid. xxiii.* It does not appear that [Peter] preached any other God than the Creator, or any other Christ than [him who was born] of Mary, or any other hope than the resurrection.

48. *Ibid. xxxvi.* Come now, you who would indulge curiosity better upon the business of your salvation, run through the apostolic churches, in which the very cathedral seats of the apostles are still in authority and in which their original letters are still read, uttering the voice and recalling the face of each. Is Achaea nearest you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi, you have the Thessalonians. If you can reach Asia, you have Ephesus. If on the other hand you are near Italy, you have Rome, whence we [*sc.* the churches in Africa] derive our authority (or, perhaps we should translate, "which is the authority we recognize"). . . . Let us see what she has learned, what she has taught; for she is in close com-

munion with the African churches. She knows one God, the Creator of all, and Christ Jesus [born] of the virgin Mary, the Son of God the Creator, and a resurrection of the flesh. She combines the Law and the Prophets with the Gospels and apostolic Epistles and drinks in her faith from them. That faith she seals with water and clothes with the Holy Spirit. She feeds on the Eucharist. She exhorts to martyrdom. Contrary to this teaching she receives no one.

49. *Apology xviii.* For from the first [God] sent into the world men whose stainless righteousness made them worthy to know the Most High and to reveal him, men abundantly endowed with the Holy Spirit, to proclaim by the Spirit that there is one God only who made all things.

50. *On Baptism vi.* The angel who presides over baptism makes straight the path for the Holy Spirit who is to come upon us, by the washing away of sins obtained by a faith which is sealed in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. . . . When both the attestation of our faith and the guarantee of our hope is pledged under three [names], there is necessarily added mention of the Church, since where the three are, the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit, there is also the Church, which is the body of the three.

51. *On the Veiling of Virgins i.* There is only one Standard of Faith which is unshakable and irreformable, namely, to believe in one God Almighty, the Maker of the world, and his Son Jesus Christ, [who was] born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, on the third day rose from the dead, was received in the heavens, now sits at the right hand of the Father, and is to come to judge living and dead, and that through a resurrection of the flesh. As long as this law of faith is preserved, other matters of discipline and conduct admit of change and correction with the coöperation of the grace of God, which is working to bring all things to perfection.

52. *On the Flesh of Christ v.* The Son of God was crucified. . . . The Son of God died. . . . Having been buried, he rose again.

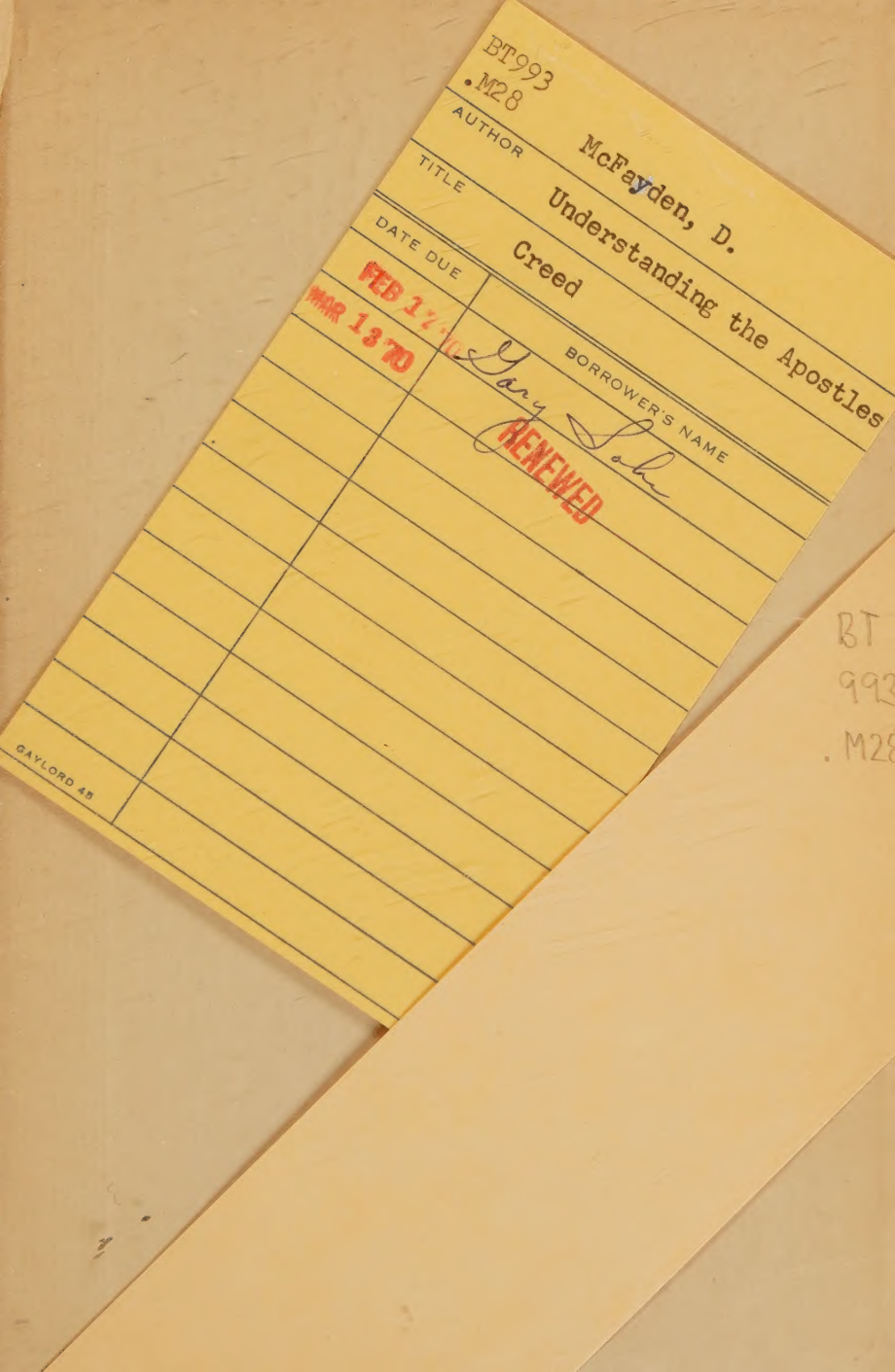
53. *Ibid. xx.* How perverted you [Valentinians] are! You

seek to take away the preposition "from" and to employ another in its stead which is not found in this connection in Holy Scripture; you say that [Christ] was born *through* a virgin, not *of* a virgin.

54. *Against Praxeas i.* The devil has in various ways imitated the truth. He has attempted at times to destroy it by affecting to defend it. Thus he teaches one Lord, the omnipotent Founder of the universe, that he may create a heresy out of the word "one." He says that it was the Father who descended into the Virgin, that it was the Father Himself who was born of her, that the Father himself suffered, in a word that Jesus Christ was the Father himself.

55. *Ibid. ii.* It is preached [by Praxeas] that the Father was born, the Father suffered, that God Himself, the omnipotent Father, is Jesus Christ. But we at all times, and especially now that we have been more fully instructed by the Paraclete who is leading us into all truth, believe in one God, but subject to this dispensation (to which we apply the term *oikonomia*): that there is also a Son of this one God, his Word who proceeded from Him, through whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made. This Word was sent by the Father into a virgin, was born of her as both man and God, Son of Man and Son of God, and named Jesus Christ. He suffered, he died and was buried according to the Scriptures, he was raised by the Father and received up into the heavens, he sits at the right hand of the Father, he is to come to judge living and dead. From thence he has sent, according to his promise, the Holy Spirit from the Father, the Paraclete, to be the sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. That this Standard goes back to the very origin of the gospel and antedates the earlier heretics, not to mention Praxeas, who is a man of yesterday, is shown by the fact that all heresies presuppose it [*sc. by differing from it*] and by the recognized novelty of Praxeas' teaching.

56. *Ibid. xxx.* The Holy Spirit, the third name of the deity . . . is the leader into all truth which is in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, according to the Christian formula of allegiance.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